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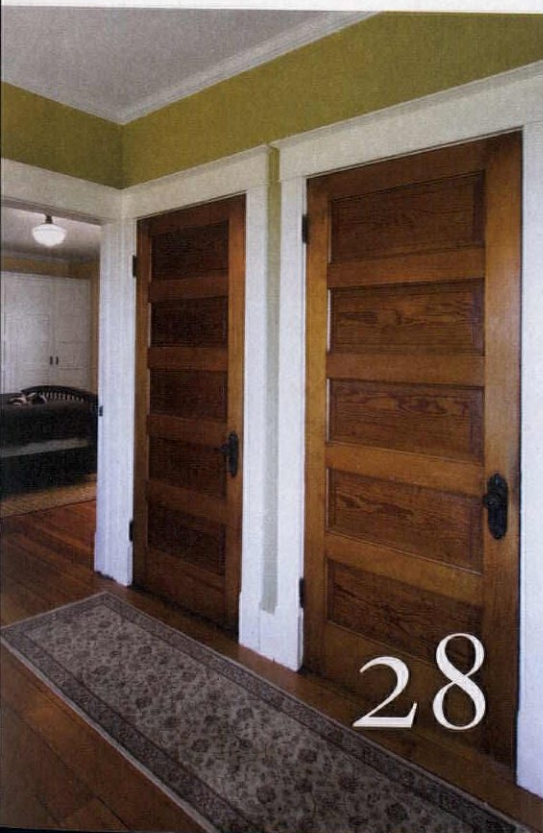


Old-House Insider

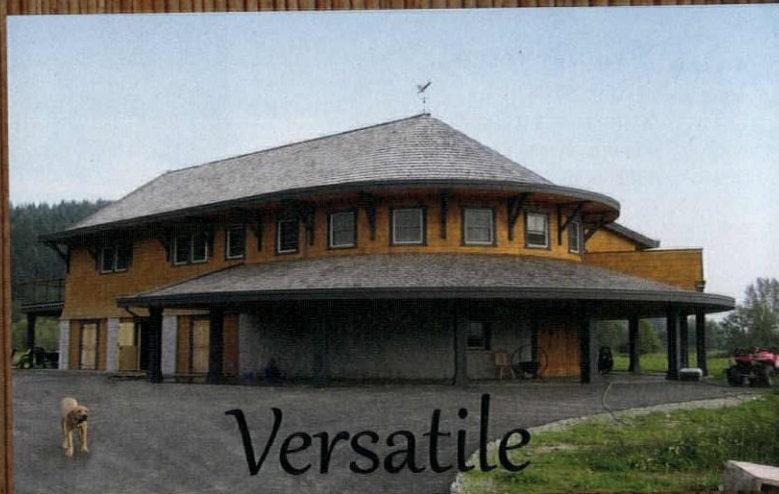
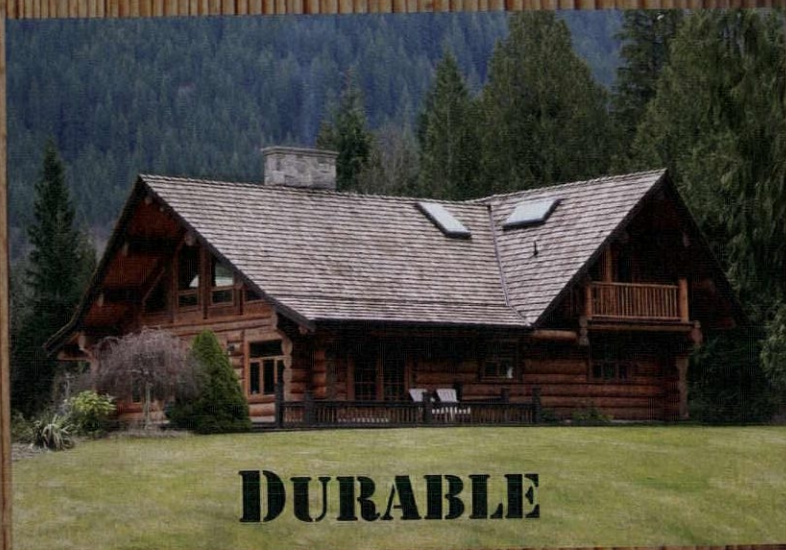
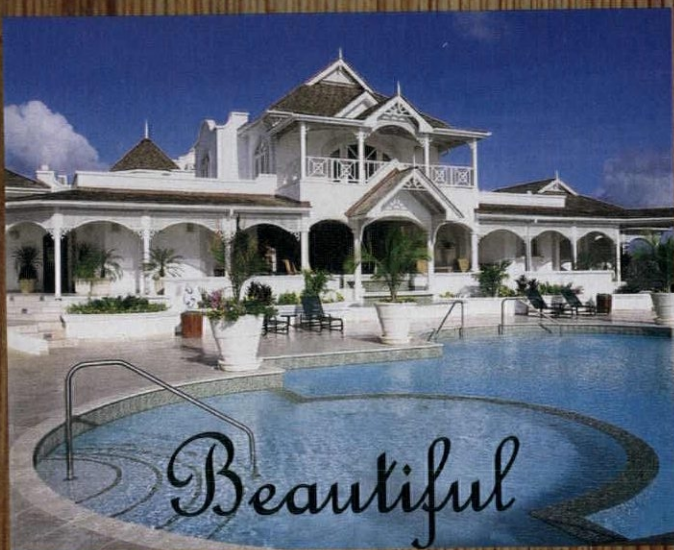
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In upstate New York, an Italianate beauty is thoughtfully retrofitted by an owner with vision.

By CLARE M. ALEXANDER



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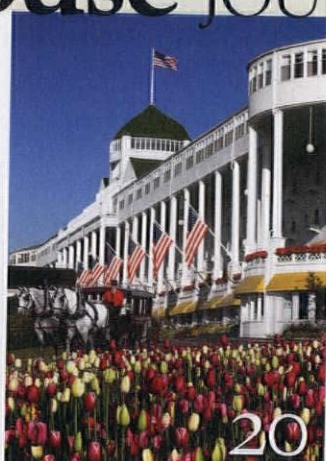
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Old House JOURNAL



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Photo by Andy Olenick. A newly restored concrete block porch defines an early 1900s Queen Anne. Story page 34.

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GRANDIN HOOD PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

Time Travel

Staying at The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island (above and page 20) is like being whisked back in time to an era when the act of traveling long distances—particularly via train—was still an enviable luxury. You can find a similar experience at the handful of other remaining railroad-built Victorian-era hotels—head online to find out more about them.

Book Smart

As you'll learn on page 24, old gardening books still hold tons of relevant advice for today's gardeners (as long as you ignore the recommendations about using arsenic for pest control, that is). If you want to take a peek inside some of these antique tomes before picking up your own copies, check out our bonus online photo gallery, where we've spotlighted a few of our favorite vintage plans, drawings, and photos from these gardening classics.

Share Your Salvage Ideas

We were amazed by the sheer number of creative architectural salvage projects in Dan Rice and Marek Ulicny's Michigan bungalow—from a vintage dresser repurposed as a bathroom vanity to a cabinet door made out of a window from Dan's childhood home. (See more starting on page 28.) Now we're turning the spotlight on you! What's the coolest salvage project you've completed? Share your best ideas in our special forum on MyOldHouseOnline.com—our favorites just might end up in a future issue of OHJ.

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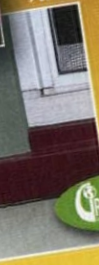
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Historic Angles

DO YOU SEEK OUT old buildings whenever you travel? For me, part of the fun of landing in a new place is finding the time to soak in the architecture. (It might be a bit therapeutic, too, taking in the smell of old wood and the feel of hand-carved handrails.) There was a surprising amount to experience when I visited Michigan's Mackinac Island last fall, home to The Grand Hotel—a legendary destination, and also a pretty rare experience. Only about a dozen such wood-frame, Victorian-era destination hotels built by railroads exist today. (To read about the others, go to oldhouseonline.com.) But it wasn't just the hotel—on the bluff above it, a series of expansive Victorian houses, built as summer “cottages” for

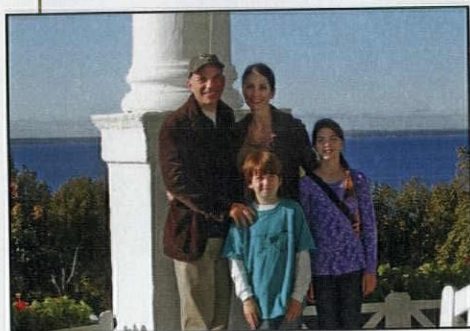
the wealthy, were enough to stop me in my tracks. The place transported me to another time, and I'm now of a mind to visit each of these “destination hotels.” What historic ports of call are on your bucket list?

With summer fully upon us, I've got more than travel on my mind—it's the perfect time to zone in on an array of outdoor repair projects (we have a short good-weather window here in the Midwest) and start checking things

off of my to-do list. That's why this issue is focused on projects that can get you inspired. While jobs like re-creating concrete blocks may seem out of reach, they shouldn't. Our article will equip you to replace a missing block or two, or even a whole foundation (see “Concrete Possibilities,” page 34). The same is true of our stucco repair story, which puts a spotlight on an unusual and easy fix for spidery cracks on stucco walls (see *Restore it Right*, page 58).

If you have any bargeboards on your to-make list, you'll need to know about scroll saws (see *Old-House Toolbox*, page 17). And if design projects are on your agenda, you'll find lots of garden ideas—pulled from the pages of vintage books—in *Outside the Old House* (page 24), as well as innovative uses for salvage in our *Old-House Living* story (page 28). And don't forget to slow down and appreciate whatever vintage architecture crosses your path, too. You never know which building might inspire your next great obsessive restoration project...

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With the family on The Grand's famous porch.

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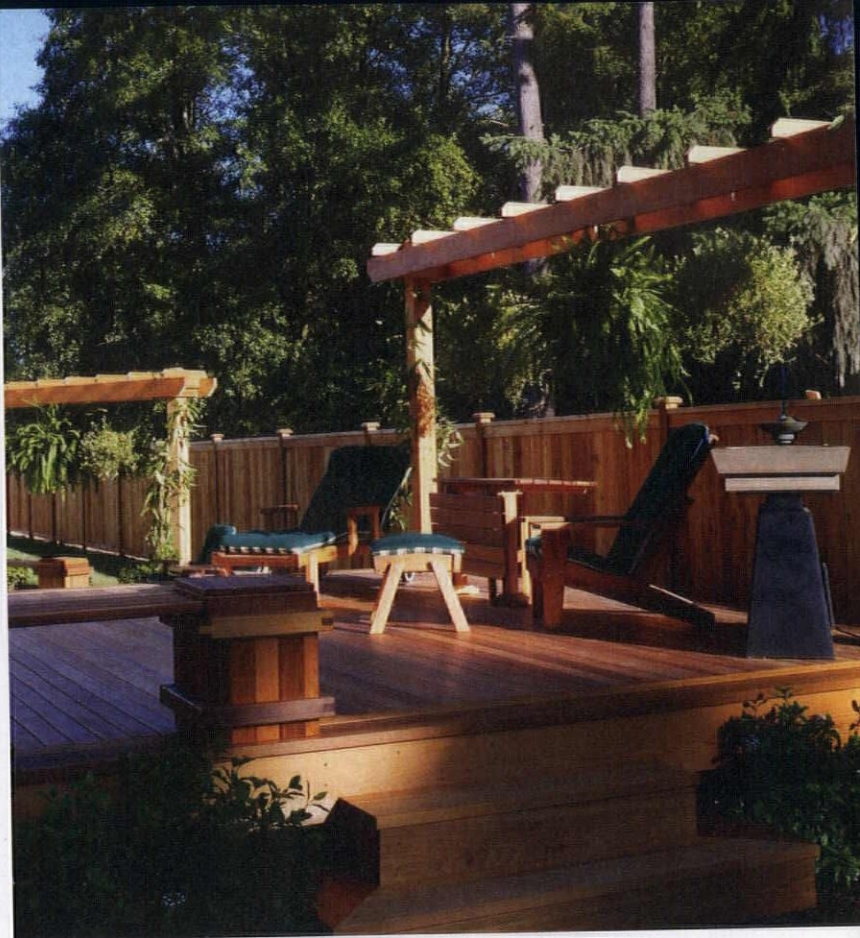
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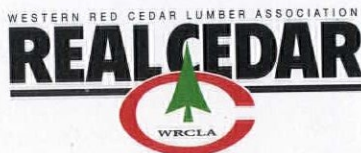
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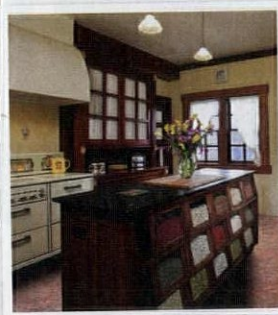
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letters

Praise for Jane

I love that Jane Powell's article ["Balancing Act," June/July] includes all the challenges she faced and compromises she made along the way. Especially in old houses, there is always much more to a remodeling project once you start peeking behind the walls...those unknowns are to be expected! Her kitchen looks great. Well done!

Case Remodeling
Birmingham, Alabama



I'm so relieved to learn that Jane Powell is an Obsessive Restorationist, too! And I agree that one has to do what's right for a historic house. If a house is merely "old" without any significant history, I would feel much less guilty for indulging my own tastes. For example, while I love painted woodwork, there is no way on earth I would take responsibility

for painting our historic 160-year-old home's walnut woodwork. We've encountered enough issues with past "repairs," so I definitely wouldn't want people to curse our handiwork someday in the future. It wouldn't be right to just finish this project as quickly as possible, because it must be done the *right* way!

Pamela Cosby
Via OldHouseOnline.com

Mystery Solved!

The mystery object [shown at left] in Doug Taylor's kitchen [Old-House Insider, June/July] is probably a lavabo, listed in the Random House Dictionary as "a washbowl with a spigot-equipped water tank above; derived from Psalm 26:6-12. Now used as a decoration." We own one that was made by the Hall China Company.

Emily Jasperse
Hastings, Michigan





Reader Tip of the Month

To finish softwood floors that have been stripped of all finishes, I like to use a 50/50 mix of boiled linseed oil and mineral spirits. Brush this on the floor, let it set an hour or two,

then wipe the floor down with a cloth until barely tacky. The mixture soaks in and makes a wonderful finish [shown above]. The good thing is that if you get a scratch, just wipe with this formula again and it's gone.

Ken Chester

Via MyOldHouseOnline.com.

Got a great tip to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com or tell us on Facebook.

Porch Perspective

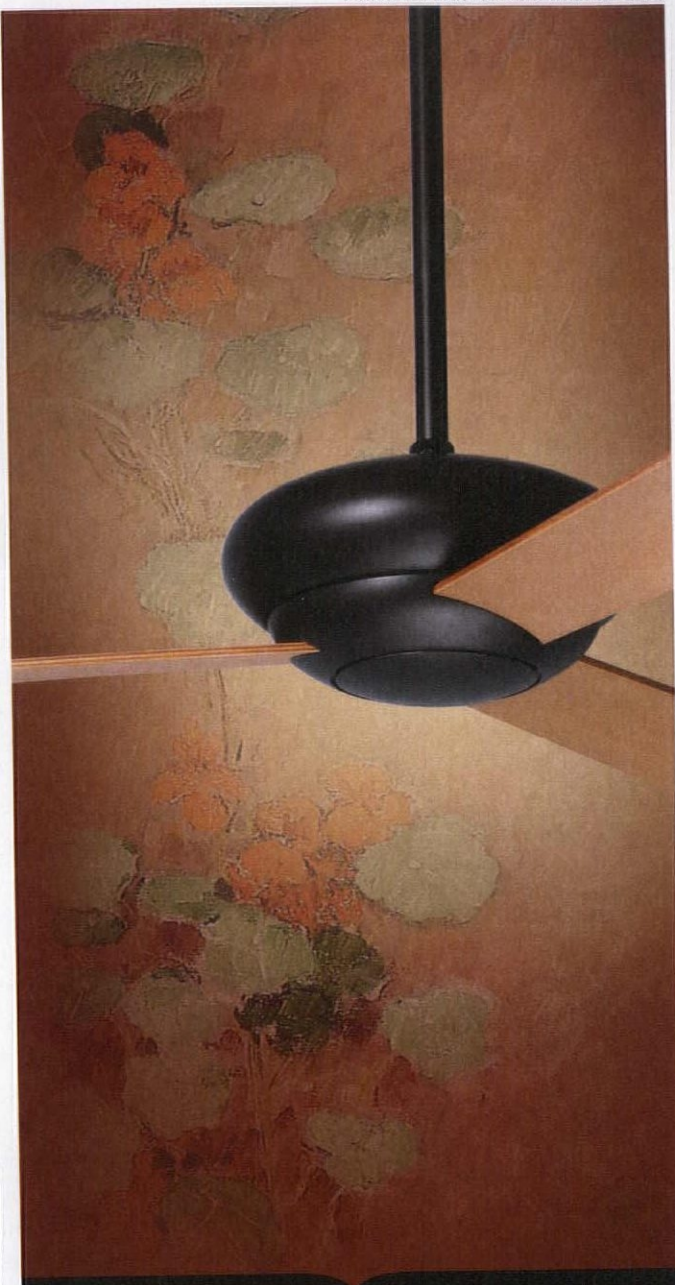
I respectfully disagree with Lair Tienter's tip regarding putting tar paper on top of porch floor joists to keep water away [Letters, June/July]. All floor joists should be made of treated lumber, so keeping water away from them is not that critical. If you are keeping the old floor joists, it is crucial that they be kept dry, but it is my opinion that the felt paper would help very little. The floorboards are nailed at every joist, leaving hundreds of holes in the felt for water to penetrate. Even if it keeps water away from the floor joists, water can still collect on top of the felt and rot the floorboards. Many years ago, OHJ had a great article that suggested putting a bead of caulk on every tongue as the porch floorboards are installed. I have done that, and have two porches that have lasted 25 years.

Dan Miller
Via email



Correction: Our June/July issue featured an incorrect price for Epifanes Marine Varnish. The \$27 price is for 500 ml; the 1-liter size (shown at left) is \$50. To buy, visit epifanes.com/na/store.

Send your letters to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com, or Old-House Journal, 2520 55th Street, Suite 210, Boulder, CO 80301. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and clarity.



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about the house

By CLARE M. ALEXANDER

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ON THE RADAR

Preservation Goes Social



The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation used Instagram to share behind-the-scenes shots from its restoration of the Stimson-Green Mansion.

At first glance, the attention-jumping immediacy of social media may seem to be at odds with historic preservation—but in fact, web-based communication has proven to be a valuable asset for preservation organizations. The National Trust's Partners in Preservation contest has made the biggest splash, with competing historic sites relying largely on sources such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to rally voting among supporters. But increasingly, organizations are using social media for everything from publicizing events to spurring advocacy action. Here's a look at what they're up to.

Facebook: The site's news feed helps keep interested parties in the loop about events and local preservation news; organizations also are starting to use it to help drive crowd-funding efforts to save structures in peril, like a push from Indiana Landmarks to save Indianapolis' Taggart Memorial. It's also ideal for photo contests—the Georgia Historic Preservation Division used Facebook to

preview its Civil War in Georgia photo contest.

Twitter: The go-to site for advocacy efforts, Twitter makes it easy for organizations and individuals to spread the word about structures in danger of demolition, tax credit issues, and more. Recently, the folks behind the handle @LAHistory rallied supporters to help save the Giant Tamale, a 1920s-era roadside icon.

Instagram: The photo-sharing site's vintage-y images are ideal for showcasing historic buildings. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's Instagram feed highlighted last year's restoration of its headquarters, the Stimson-Green Mansion.

YouTube: Want to do a little armchair traveling? Many organizations feature tours of local historic buildings and neighborhoods on their YouTube channels. You might learn something, too—Preservation Virginia's YouTube channel, for instance, features step-by-step videos that detail how to restore old windows.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

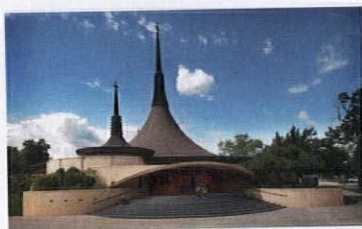
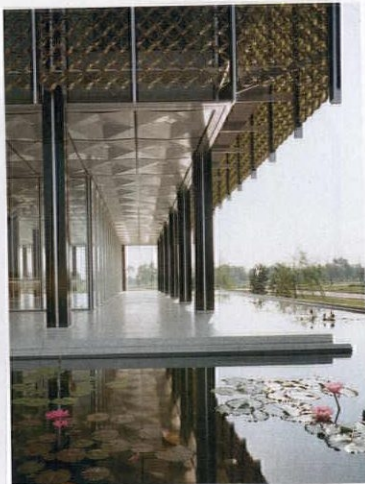
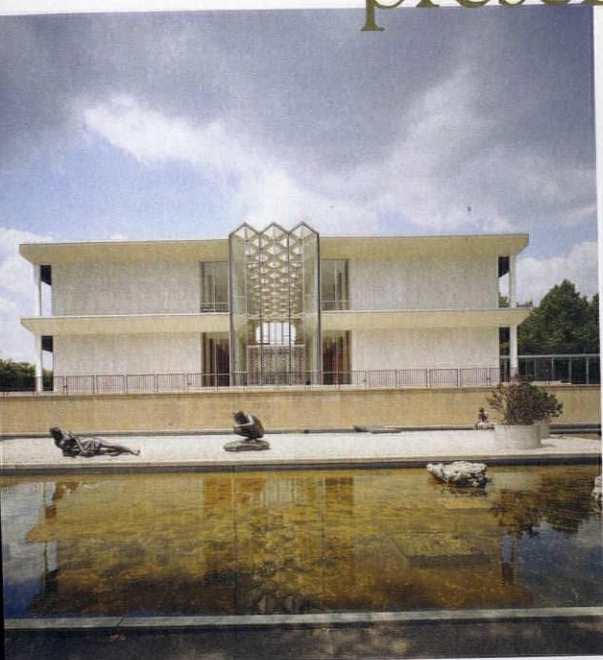
Serial restorers often speak wistfully about their "forever house," the one that will finally inspire them to step away from the plaster trowel and pronounce their work done (maintenance notwithstanding, of course). But "forever houses" aren't always easy to find—they have to be an ideal combination of location, style, and functionality.

In her new book, *The Just Right Home*, designer Marianne Cusato, author of the 2008 architecture guide *Get Your House Right*, explores the myriad personal factors that can take a home from "for now" to "forever."

Starting with the macro (whether to rent or buy, where in the country to live) and working down to the micro (how to assess the house's condition, what certain upgrades will cost you), Cusato offers a simple formula for getting it just right: The house should strike a balance between function, cost, and delight. Broken down into easily digestible sections and complemented by charts, quizzes, and checklists, *The Just Right Home* is a straightforward and meticulously complete guide essential for anyone who's house-shopping—whether you're on your first house or your 15th.



preservation perspectives



CLOCKWISE: Minoru Yamasaki's Detroit-area McGregor Center and Reynolds Metal Company Building; St. Mary's Church in Alma, designed by a Frank Lloyd Wright disciple.

Modern Marvels



A new initiative promotes Michigan's importance in propelling modernism forward. We talked to Brian Conway, the State Historic Preservation Officer, to learn how.

BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS

DEMETRA APOSPOROS: What is Michigan Modern?

BRIAN CONWAY: It's an effort to recognize and acknowledge Michigan's story in the development of the modern movement, and to recognize and promote Michigan's importance as a modern design center.

DA: People don't generally think of Michigan as a hub for modernism.

BC: Michigan really was an important epicenter of design during the period from roughly 1940 to 1970, for a number of reasons. To start, Eliel Saarinen arrived to head up Cranbrook Academy of Art, and was instantly an attraction for young designers who wanted to learn from him. The University of Michigan, which was the first to move away from

Beaux Arts classicism toward modernism, was also a draw. Then there were the auto industry and the furniture makers in the western part of the state.

DA: How did the auto industry fuel the movement?

BC: The auto industry learned early on that they couldn't just produce black boxes on wheels; they had to have real design. So they hired Harley Earl, an L.A.-based designer who was customizing cars for the stars. He became the first president of design for General Motors, which was another draw.

DA: What about the furniture?

BC: On the west side of the state, Herman Miller moved into modern design, and brought in George Nelson, who was the

first in any furniture company to hire outside designers. Soon we saw now-iconic furniture being made, from people like the Eameses and Noguchi. Charles and Ray Eames, of course, were connected to Cranbrook, where Florence Knoll was as well. She went on to found Knoll furniture, which also produced many pieces of iconic modern furniture. These people, including designers from GM, were all mixing in this big swirl of design energy in Michigan; this did not occur anywhere else in the country.

DA: These are big names. Does a Michigan connection surprise people?

BC: Yes. Charles and Ray Eames are most largely associated with L.A., because after they left Cranbrook they moved there, but many of their major projects came out of Herman Miller. And Detroit was absolutely the center of the auto industry at the time, with much innovation. There were many prominent architects, too, like Albert Kahn and Minoru Yamasaki.

DA: Yamasaki would go on to design the Trade Center Towers?

BC: He did, and he's a very important figure in modernism. He spent his entire career here working out of Troy.

DA: Where can people see the Michigan Modern exhibit?

BC: The exhibit is scheduled to be at Cranbrook from June 15 through October 12, then moves to the Grand Rapids Art Museum from May to August 2014. We've also produced about a half-dozen walking tours exploring modernism around the state.

For more information, visit michiganmodern.org.

ask ohj

Q: As a new owner of an old house, I understand I'm supposed to bleed the radiators periodically. What is this, and when and how should I do it?

A: **Dan Holohan:** If you have a steam system, the venting takes care of itself with automatic air vents that release air when the steam arrives. When the steam condenses, the air moves back into the radiators. Steam radiators breathe, just like us, which is part of what makes them so lovable. (Steam vents are usually bullet-shaped or round, while hot water vents are smaller.)

But like most homeowners, you probably have a hot-water system, which is closed to the atmosphere. These systems are filled with cold water from the street and use street pressure to purge the initial air from the whole system. The challenge, though, is that cold water contains air. When the boiler initially heats this water, the air rises to the high points of the system. Most old-house radiators have a lot of internal space where the air tends to wind up. Trapped air can slow the flow of water, causing the system to be inefficient, and in many cases, noisy. (Those gurgles and pings probably aren't a poltergeist.)

So we bleed the radiators to empty them of air, and when we do, fresh (cold) water takes the place of the air that leaves. This water usually comes in through an automatic fill valve near the boiler. There is, of course, more air present in that fresh water, which also can wind up in the radiators, but it's less each time, and if your system is tight,

there shouldn't be much need for bleeding after a while. Let your ears guide you: If you're hearing pinging or gurgling, it's time to vent.

A good time of year to do this is in the fall when the system first starts. If you find you have to do it every week, there's probably a leak in your system that's letting in too much fresh water (and dissolved air). Check this by shutting off the automatic feed valve and watching the pressure gauge for a day. Look for the valve close to the boiler—it will usually be on a copper pipe that connects to the domestic water line, and usually has a conical shape. Closing the valve will shut the water to the boiler so you can perform the test. A rule of thumb for system pressure is to allow 1 psi for every 2' of vertical distance between the feed valve and the highest point in the heating system. (The

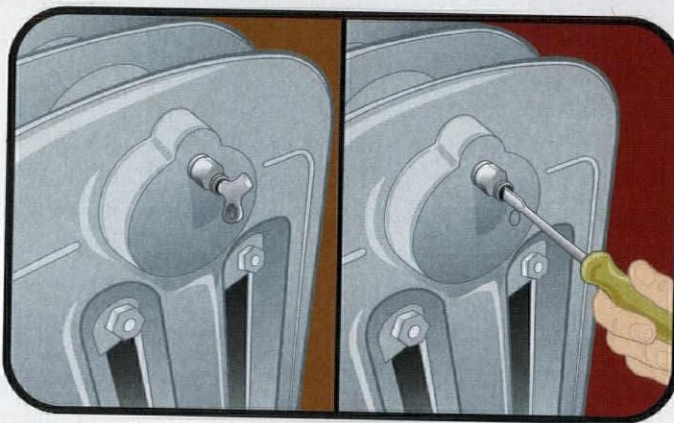
normal pressure for a two-story house is 12 psi—a valve in the basement, then two stories up from there.) If you see the pressure dropping dramatically, it means there's a leak somewhere—probably in a pipe that goes either underground or through a crawlspace. Get this fixed right away.

When you're ready to bleed the radiator, look for an air vent at the top. It will be relatively small, probably silver in color, and it should be on the side opposite the radiator's inlet valve. Turn down your thermostat so the circulating pump stops running; you want the water to be still while you're bleeding.

Next, examine the end of the vent. You'll see either a slot for a screwdriver or a hex for a small vent key. Open it slowly, making sure you have a cup in your other hand to catch the water that will follow the released air. Vent until



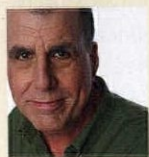
Radiator air vents are typically either hexagonal and opened via a small key (left) or slotted and opened with a screwdriver (right). Slowly turning this valve will release air; a spurt of water will signal that the air has been emptied.



RANDY SWEITZER ILLUSTRATIONS

only water squirts out, then screw the vent closed. It's that simple.

If your vent needs a key and you can't find it, you can get a replacement at most hardware stores. Or, if you have a key to wind an antique clock, these also often fit in the air vent, and then you can bleed in style. 🏠



Dan Holohan, a longtime contributor to OHJ, runs the website HeatingHelp.com and is the author of the book *The Lost Art of Steam Heating*.

MORE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q:

I have a 1930s Cape style house. Somewhere along the line the bathroom doorknob and mortise lockset was changed to a standard 2 3/8" brass doorknob, which cut a huge hole in the wood of the door to accommodate the newer locking system. How can I convert this? I have all of the original pieces. —Jean

A: Fill with wood, then stain and finish to match. I am currently working on an 1880 Victorian with these issues. I used three different stain colors to match and hide the repairs. —Randall

A: Depending on the house type, you can sometimes successfully use rectangular escutcheon plates or surface-mounted latches to pair with (or replace) rosettes. —Phil

A: I'm a locksmith by trade and see this all the time. It's very difficult to repair the door with wood, as you're only dealing with a very thin piece (between the outside of the door and the inside of the mortise). Best to try to find two rectangular escutcheon plates, or any pattern you like, as long as it covers the 2 1/8" hole. It can be a challenge to find a plate that covers and matches up with your keyhole/thumb turn measurement. —Andy

Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ**, 2520 55th Street, Suite 210, Boulder, CO 80301, by email to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com, or on Facebook at facebook.com/oldhousejournal.

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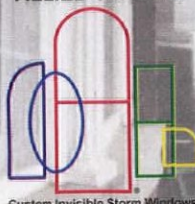
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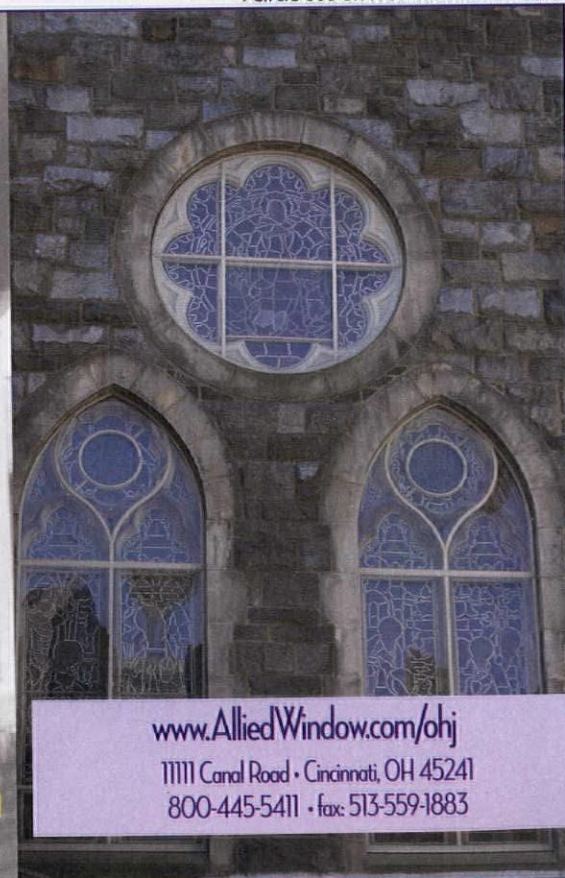
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tools & materials

Our editors pick the best products to make your old-house projects easier.

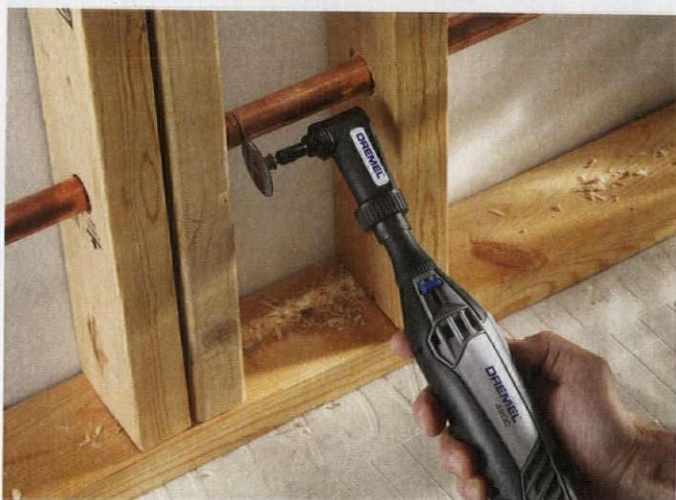


Drive Time

When you're driving tons of screws or bolts (for example, when building a deck or porch), it helps to have a driver that's compact, lightweight, and powerful. Rockwell's new 16V drill-driver and impact driver deliver on all counts, offering 302 and 950 inch-pounds of torque, respectively, in tools that weigh less than 3 pounds. With a new MaxLithium battery that lasts 30 percent longer than previous models and has a charge cycle of just 30 minutes, you'll also waste less time waiting for the battery to recharge. (Bonus: Once the battery reaches the end of its life, Rockwell will replace it for free.) \$139.99. Call (866) 514-7625, or visit rockwelltools.com.

See the Light

Old-house restoration often involves working in dark, cramped areas—in basements and crawlspaces, beneath sinks, sometimes even inside walls. Compact, unobtrusive illumination is key to brightening up these shadowy spaces. If the old flashlight-clenched-between-your-teeth routine is getting old, try the new magnetic LED light from MagnaLight. The 6-watt light puts out the same amount of power as a 50-watt halogen bulb via a wide beam that helps to eliminate dark spots. It's mounted on a heavy-duty magnetic foot that will tightly grip any metal surface; the rotating head allows you to direct the light exactly where you need it. \$154.95. Call (800) 369-6671, or visit magnalight.com.



Quick-Change Artist

One of the benefits of an oscillating multi-tool is its ability to transform from detail sander to saw to router (and more) with each accessory change. But transitioning between those accessories can eat up valuable project time, which is why Dremel has added a quick-change feature to the latest version of its popular multi-tool. Attachments are mounted to and released from the tool via two integrated levers, eliminating the need to use a wrench to switch attachments. The new EZ Change mechanism accommodates the 1/8" shank standard on all Dremel accessories. Dremel 4200 with EZ Change, \$129.99. Call (800) 437-3635, or visit dremel.com.

old-house toolbox

Scroll Saw

If you need to replicate Victorian-era woodwork, this specialty tool is a must-have.

By RAY TSCHOEPE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEWALT

Homes of the mid- to late 19th century were often the beneficiaries of fanciful and sometimes complex architectural woodwork. These ornate wooden vergeboards, porch brackets, balusters, and interior room dividers were usually the product of one tool: the scroll saw.

Manual versions of the scroll saw, which feature a very thin blade mounted between the ends of a C-shaped frame, were in use as early as the 16th century. Because of the small blade cross section, this saw could make very tight turns in wood, and unlike band saws, it could cut interior shapes by passing one end of the unfastened blade through a small hole drilled inside the perimeter of the pattern.

Today, virtually all scroll saws are driven by electric motors. They usually feature a table with a very thin blade passing from underneath to an overarm fastening system. Once the motor is activated, the blade travels up and down over a distance (or “stroke”) of about 1”.

How to Use It

Cutting curves with the scroll saw takes some practice. As you guide the wood through the blade, you’ll feel the resistance increase as the curves get tighter and tighter. Adjust your feed rate and the

speed of the blade until you feel comfortable. Keep an eye on the blade, too: It should flex a bit, but too much flex will lead to a beveled cut or a broken blade.

The distance between the blade and the deepest part of the framework that supports it is called the throat. The throat on most tabletop models ranges in size from 12” to 20”, which is usually sufficient to handle the vast majority of projects. Stationary tools may have larger throats for more demanding pieces, such as the broad decorative fretwork on a Victorian room divider.

What to Look For

Small bench-top saws, which are most practical for DIYers, are divided into two broad categories: parallel link and parallel arm systems. The latter tends to be a bit more expensive and produces less vibration, so it moves more smoothly through the material, but it does contain more joints, so it can exhibit signs of wear earlier. Parallel link systems are more common and usually a bit more durable. They do, however, tend to vibrate more.

Speaking of vibration, choose a model with a cast iron table. Cast iron is flat, stable, and heavy, which

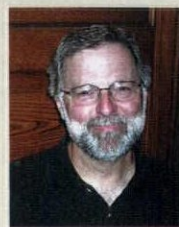
can help dampen vibrations. The better saws will have cast iron bodies to further add mass to reduce vibrations. A blade changing and tensioning system that doesn’t require tools will come in handy, too, for the blade changes that are routinely necessary for matching the blade type to the material being cut.

To enhance the cutting experience even further, good-quality saws are equipped with the ability to adjust speeds, either on a continuous dial or a series of discrete speed jumps, which reduces burning by running the blade too fast in hard materials.

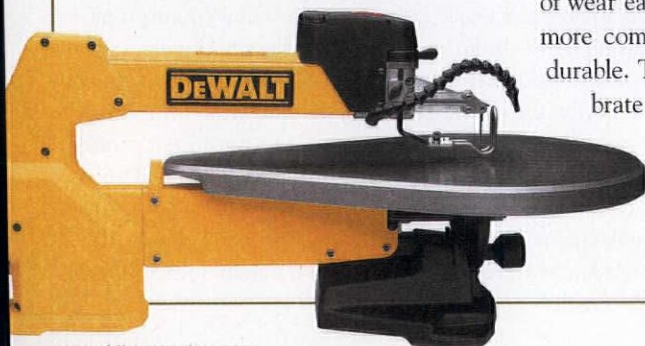
Additional features that can make your work considerably more enjoyable include a moveable dust blower, a vacuum port, and an on-board light. If you’ll be cutting a particularly complex pattern, consider saws with a tilting table or a pivoting head on the upper arm, which will make it easier to navigate the multitude of direction changes needed.

The Bottom Line

Buy the saw that’s the best match for the work you foresee, but don’t limit yourself. Once you’ve gained some familiarity with this tool, you’ll want to try your hand at lots of new pattern possibilities. 🛠️



Ray Tschoepe, one of OHJ’s contributing editors, is the director of conservation at the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust in Philadelphia.



period products

From whimsical to practical, these new finds will up the historical ante in your home. BY CLARE M. ALEXANDER

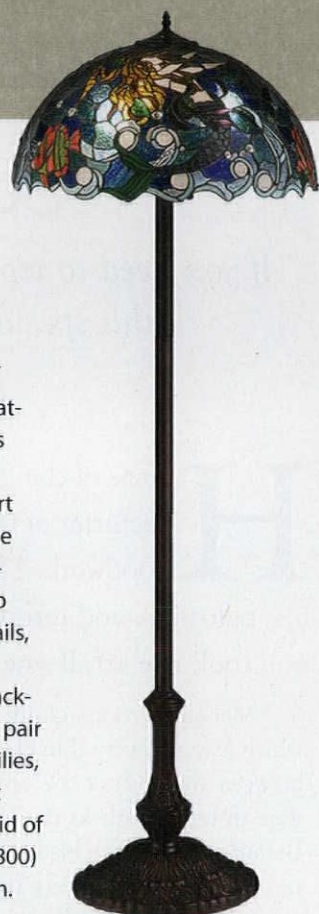


Phone Home

As more and more Americans become reliant on cell phones, the familiar sight of the home telephone is in danger of extinction. But audio manufacturer Pyle has blended that nostalgic aesthetic with modern technology in their new line of smartphone-enabled old-fashioned telephones. Modeled after the earliest rotary phones, the setups allow you to use your mobile phone through the vintage handset and dial pad for a retro experience (certain models also offer charging via an integrated dock). Model PRT351 (shown), \$204.99. Call (888) 318-7953, or visit pyleaudio.com.

Art of Glass

Want to inject a subtle bit of whimsy into Victorian decorating? Meyda Tiffany's art glass lamps take an iconic form—popularized by Louis Comfort Tiffany around the turn of the century—and add a few surprises. The newest floor lamp offerings feature playful details, like languorous mermaids against a jewel-like ocean background (shown at right) or a pair of ducks gliding past water lilies, for a personalized statement that remains refined. Mermaid of the Sea lamp, \$274.95. Call (800) 222-4009, or visit meyda.com.



Screen Stars

In the open floorplans that typify mid-century modern houses, screen walls can be essential for conferring a sense of separation between rooms without disrupting the flow of light throughout the home. While originals often were constructed from concrete, Crestview Doors' Redi Screens are made of easier-to-install wood. The company recently expanded their extensive line of funky mid-century-patterned panels with the Quatrefoil Collection, which draws on gothic architectural motifs to create four simple yet eye-catching new designs that can be used indoors or out. Available in maple or MDF, starting at \$213 per panel. Call (866) 454-6302, or visit crestviewdoors.com.



The Kitchen Zinc

Given that they're practically indestructible, metal countertops are a growing trend—but the darling of today's designers, stainless steel, is too industrial for a traditional kitchen. Instead, go with a metal heavy on the old-house pedigree: zinc, which was often used for early 20th-century sinks and counters because it's softer than other metals so less likely to chip dropped plates and bowls. The zinc countertops from Brooks Custom will eventually age to a pewter-like patina that will complement the warm tones of a period-style kitchen. From around \$200 per square foot. Call (800) 244-5432, or visit brookscustom.com.



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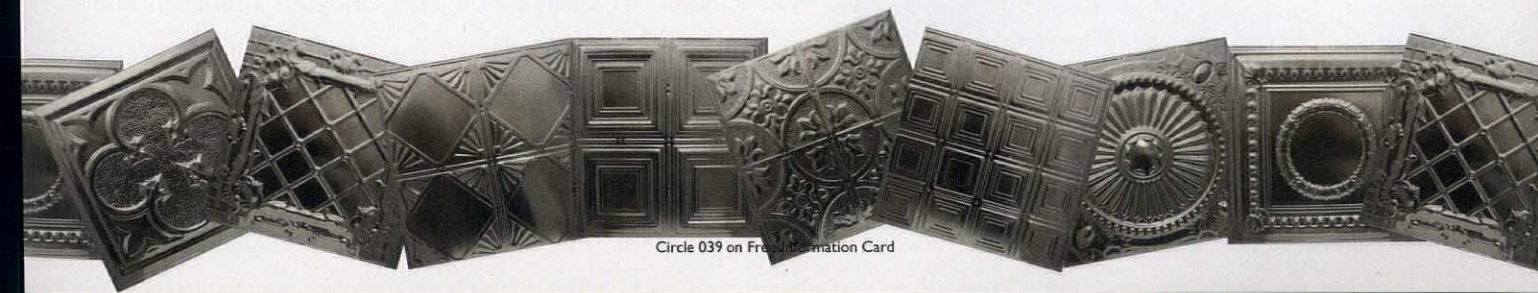


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historic retreats



A vision in blooms awaits visitors, many of whom arrive by carriage. **INSET:** The hotel in its early years. **BELOW:** The famous porch overlooks the Straits of Mackinac.

The Grand Hotel

A visit to this gracious beauty, located on an island between Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas, is a rite of passage for Midwesterners.

By DEMETRA APOSPOROS



Sitting in a vintage rocker on The Grand Hotel's expansive, geranium-laden front porch—rumored to be the world's longest—visitors are transported back in time. As the clip-clops of hooves from horse-drawn carriages in the hidden driveway below ring out like a metronome, and you're met with an unobstructed view across the dusky blue waters of the Straits of Mackinac, it's easy to imagine being here, immersed in the same sensory delights, some 125 years ago.

www.oldhouseonline.com

Back then, The Grand was new—an exotic destination hotel built by railroads to serve wealthy travelers from Detroit, St. Louis, and Chicago. By the early years of the 1900s, there were 1,200 such hotels across the country serving as oases for upscale Victorians fleeing the heat and pollution of summer in their post-industrialized cities. Today just a handful of these special wood-frame hotels remain; The Grand is the only one privately owned.

All in the Family

Since 1934, it's been in the hands of one family, who have worked hard to sustain this all-wood hotel through the brutal winters that define northern Michigan. Current president Dan Musser III takes advantage of The Grand's six-month winter shutdown to make any needed repairs. "I walk every guest room and make a detailed punch list," Musser says. Being closed throughout the winter also saves on heating bills in a building created as a summer retreat, and requires a full draining of the pipes that feed the radiators and guest bathrooms—a task carried out with military-like precision each fall.

But doing repairs to plaster, paint, and wallpaper is a tricky business in the snap of winter, requiring the use of a custom-engineered electric food service cart. "Because the heat's off, we must warm the rooms—and surrounding rooms—to 55 degrees in order for paint or wallpaper to stick," Musser explains. The hotel retains 35 maintenance staff and 15 contractors for the inevitable touch-ups needed to keep this National Register *grand dame* in fine form.

The first family member to helm the hotel was Dan's great-uncle, William Stuart Woodfill, who arrived on the island to escape hay fever and fell so in love with the Victorian beauty that he asked the then-manager to give him a job—any job. "I'll work for noth-

ing," he famously said. "Pay me at the end of summer what you think I'm worth."

Woodfill went on to purchase the hotel in 1933. In 1951, he hired his nephew, R.D. (Dan) Musser, as a clerk—he worked nearly every job in the hotel before being named president in 1960, a job his son, Dan Musser III, took over in 1989 after stints in every department except the stables. Many credit the family's vision, attention to detail, and constant presence (a member of the family is on-site virtually every day the hotel is open) with The Grand's success. The hotel is a legendary destination throughout the Midwest (but especially among Michiganders), and today attracts guests from around the world.

Restoration Redux

Like most expansive Victorian-era wooden buildings, this one has required some serious upkeep beyond the seasonal maintenance. In the late 1970s, Musser's parents undertook extensive structural repairs on both the badly sloping east wing, which was made level, and the famous porch, which received concrete footings for the first time, along with steel pillars. At about the same time, the couple redecorated the interior, hiring Carleton Varney of Dorothy Draper & Company to

outfit the place in a riot of color. None of the 385 guest rooms is exactly alike, adding an element of surprise around every turn.

The extravagant dining room gets an additional boost of drama from knee-to-ceiling windows onto the porch. It's a great place for people-watching, from waiters expertly balancing huge trays of food and attending to every need, to guests arriving in their finest clothes, thanks to the dress code in effect since the late 1800s, and maintained by R.D. Musser. "My father used to say, 'It doesn't cost us a dime to make men put on a coat and tie at night, but it makes us look better,'" Musser explains. (Today, *maitre d's* expertly remove caps from men who forget to do so as they enter the restaurant.)

Other time travels include afternoon tea in the parlor, complete with musical accompaniment by either a piano or harp. Guests also can play croquet on the lawn—a tradition since the hotel's opening.

Island Life

It's hard to imagine how difficult it must have been to construct this building on a tiny (8¼ miles around), remote island in Lake Huron. Hotel historian Bob Tagatz explains that all of the materials—some 1.5 million



Each of the 385 guest rooms is decorated differently; this upscale suite is named for the Vanderbilt family.

Want to stay in another Victorian-era railroad hotel? Consult our online guide.

OLDHOUSEonline 

historic retreats

board-feet of milled lumber—were pulled by horses over an ice bridge to the island. Tagatz once interviewed a woman whose grandfather helped with the dangerous task of transporting the lumber over the ice. “She told me nobody spoke, because they were too busy listening,” he says. “Every time a horse’s hoof fell they heard a crack—and wondered if it would be the big one that would take them to the bottom of the Straits.” It is beyond a miracle, Tagatz says, that nobody fell through the ice. The materials were transported over the winter of 1886, and the hotel was constructed in just 90 days the following spring, in order to open—on time—for the season on July 10, 1887.

The island carries its own historical mystique. Cars were banned here in the late 19th century, for safety and health reasons, leaving horses and bicycles as the sole means of transport, which adds to the romantic feel.



The Grand Hotel

286 Grand Avenue
Mackinac Island, MI 49757
(800) 334-7263
grandhotel.com

The hotel is open late April through late October (reservation line is open year-round). Room rates start at \$264 per person for double occupancy, and include a full breakfast and a five-course dinner. Check the website for special offers.

LEFT: The enormous dining room has views to the front porch—and beyond.

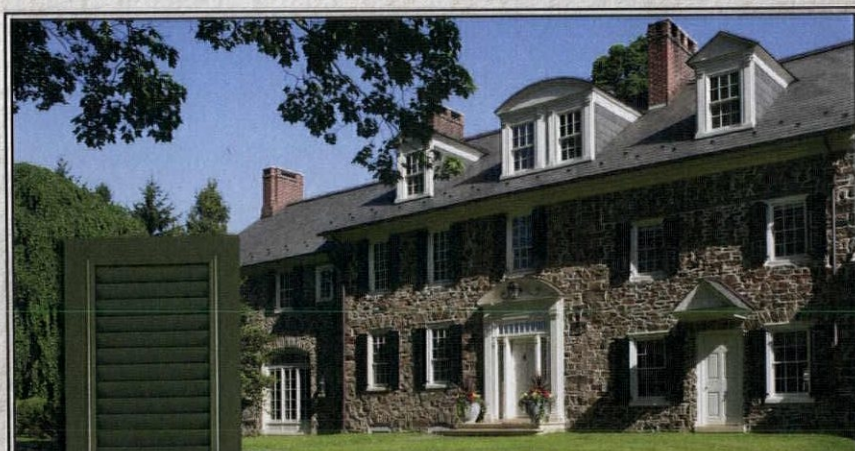
The hotel owns a fleet of antique carriages that ferry guests up a steep incline from the dock to the hotel, a location that affords unobstructed views from the 660'-long porch.

It's easy to see why The Grand was selected as the setting for the 1980 movie *Somewhere in Time*, a love story featuring Christopher Reeve as a modern playwright who returns to 1912 to court an actress, played by Jane Seymour. The movie has

proven so popular that it's inspired themed weekends each October, with visitors dressing in period clothing and reenacting scenes from the film. It continues to draw visitors to this day. “Every time the movie replays, we see the reservation phones light up,” Musser says.

Movie fans or not, from the moment visitors catch their first glimpse of The Grand's impressive slash of white architecture from the dock, they know they won't soon forget it. 🏠

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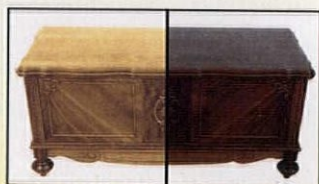
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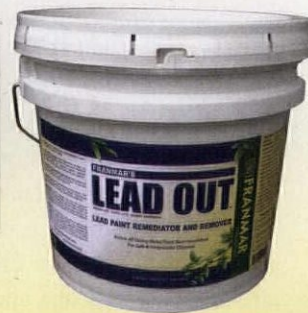
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outside the old house

BY THE BOOK



Antique gardening books hold relevant lessons for today's gardeners—especially those who live in old houses.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JESSIE KEITH

Reading antiquated gardening books can feel like finding buried treasure. They tell of times when tools and garden plants were simpler and planting designs classic. Many deliver loads of useful, old-timey tips and techniques, making them that much more fun to read. And they tend to be beautifully illustrated—all the more reason to seek them out.

There is a distinction between old and new garden books: Older tomes are often broader in scope and informationally richer. In many cases, authors were writing about now-common garden plants, then new to horticulture, so every ounce of information was provided, from origins

to collection histories and cultural details.

The first garden book mass-printed in English was titled a *Most Briefe and Pleasant Treatise, Teachings Howe to Dress, Sowe, and Set a Garden* (1563), and was produced in England by Thomas Hyll. It was a small, simple book directed toward the average gardener at a time when reading and books were largely reserved for the elite. Everyday garden books appeared with more frequency in the 17th and 18th centuries—English author William Lawson wrote prolifically on horticultural subjects for women in *The Country House-Wives Garden* (1648), while landscape designer and author Humphry Repton brought the concept of design theory to the average gardener in *Sketches*

and *Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1795).

In America, where farmer's almanacs were the chief source of growing information, garden writing didn't reach mass audiences until the early 19th century. The first two notable tomes were *The American Gardener's Calendar* (1806) by Philadelphia-based Irish immigrant Bernard M'Mahon (whose popularity was helped by Thomas Jefferson's patronage of his Philadelphia nursery), and *The American Gardener* (1804), written by Washingtonians John Gardiner and David Hepburn. Both books followed the traditional English formula of providing a seasonal, monthly guide for everything from planting to soil preparation, propagation, pruning, and plant selection.

During the Victorian era, as American and European explorers scoured the world for undiscovered floral marvels, plant-collecting and gardening became all the rage. Garden books highlighted the latest in new and wonderful garden plants, from the now-familiar (like petunias, coleus, and flowering verbenas) to a few less common favorites (like painted tongue and the chimney bellflower) just waiting to be rediscovered.

Helpful Hints

New collectors of old gardening books should start with the basics. Classic references, such as the amazingly thorough four-volume set *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture* (1900-02) by the great Liberty Hyde Bailey, never outgrow their utility. Another book that's informative, easy to find, and includes lots of retro-chic garden designs and stonework plans is *America's Garden Book* (1939), by husband-and-wife team Louise and James Bush-Brown. She was a horticulturist and he a landscape architect, so their book has the perfect balance of both themes. It is also one of the first to include USDA Hardiness Zone information, which first became available in 1936.

Specialty garden books tend to offer the most colorful content and illustrations. Of the many flower garden books, the helpful *The Flower Garden: A Manual for the Amateur Gardener* by Ida D. Bennett (1910) delivers lots of sage advice, along with loads of practical period photographs and line drawings. Bennett's thoughts on garden design reveal that the Victorian tendency toward asymmetry wasn't limited to architecture: "The scheme of a permanent garden must be decided by the size and shape of the plot of ground at command, an irregular

plot sometimes lending itself to more graceful arrangement than a symmetrical one."

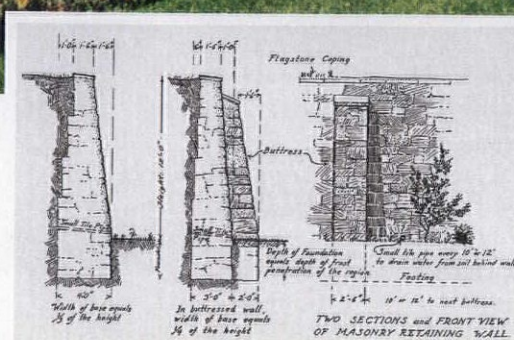
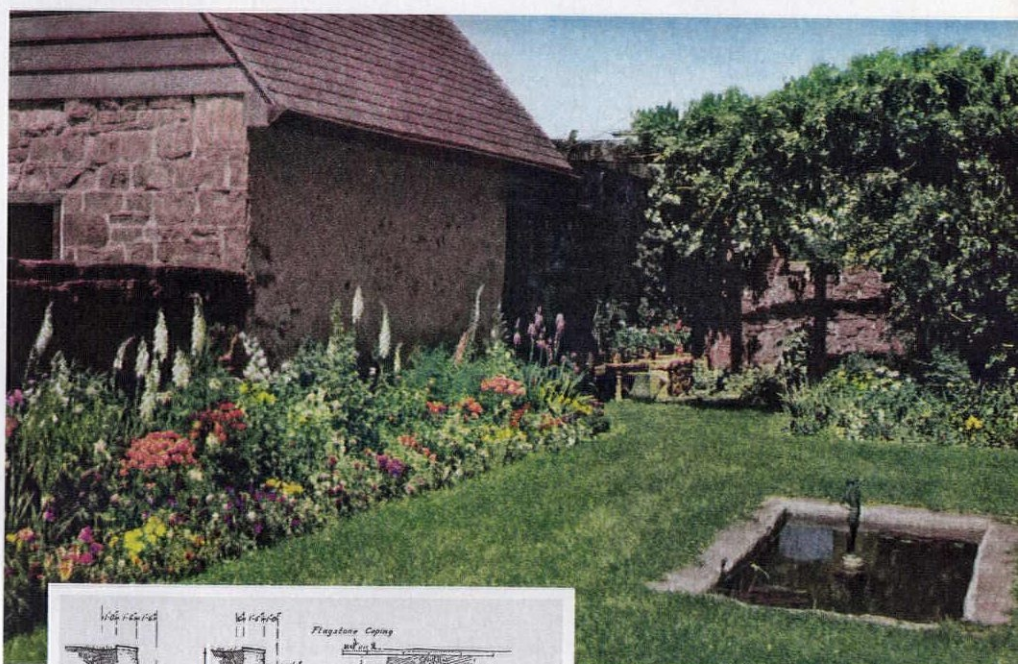
The equally informative and colorful *Flowers and Their Histories* (1956) by Alice Coats is infused with a surprising amount of humor and anecdotal stories: frightening floral concoctions thought to be medicinal, strange recipes for fertilizers, and the popularity of certain flowers throughout the ages. Old-house garden designers can certainly learn a thing or two from *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* (1908; reprinted in 1983) by the mother of garden design, Gertrude Jekyll. Not only does Jekyll address harmonious floral color groupings (for instance, a September flower border of scarlet dahlias, tall flaming kniphofias, and brilliant orange African marigolds, among others), but she presents seasonal displays of still-common flowers that will keep complementary color in the garden year-round.

For heirloom vegetable lovers, there's the classic *Field and Garden Vegetables of*

America (1865) by Fearing Burr Jr., which is filled with lovely line drawings of more than 1,100 vegetables and herbs—some, like the oyster plant and sponge cucumber, rare in today's gardens. And for timeless vegetable gardening advice, *The Principles of Vegetable Gardening* (1913) by Liberty Hyde Bailey is a treasure trove. With skillful detail, he plots out the growing parameters for all things edible, providing advice for favorites like tomatoes. "Tomatoes give early and better results when vines are trained [and pruned]," he advises, going on to say that "when frost threatens, the largest green tomatoes can be picked and allowed to ripen in drawers or other closed, dry places."

Advice Column

Adjusting to present times is necessary when considering pest and disease management. Gardening back in the day wasn't always so rosy: Dangerous pesticides like DDT, arsenic, and nicotine were com-



ABOVE & LEFT: Images from the 1939 tome *America's Garden Book* offer ideas for plotting an intimate garden (above) and plans for building a stone retaining wall (left).

See more photos from antique garden books in our bonus photo gallery.

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outside the old house

monly used. Take, for example, the government-issued *Food Gardens for Defense* (1942) by M.G. Kanes, which advised growers to use arsenic to get rid of bugs, and to spray vegetables, grapes, and berries with highly toxic lead arsenate powder, as well as nicotine sulfate—an illegal act these days.

Amusing tips and eloquent writing abound—and are just as relevant today as they were a century or more ago. Some of the best are in Ida Bennett's *The Flower Garden*, where she commits an entire chapter to garden don'ts: "Don't raise more plants than you have room for, or strength and time to cultivate" or, "The outside window-box is a thing of beauty if well cared for,

a disfigurement if neglected." In an equally timeless vein, Liberty Hyde Bailey dismissed romantic Victorian notions of gardening in his *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture*, saying, "From 1830 to 1860 there appeared many of those superficial and fashionable books, which deal with the language of flowers, and which assume that the proper way to popularize botany is by means of manufactured sentiment."

Any old-house gardener would be remiss not to delve into at least a few of these classic gems of garden writing. Even if you don't plan to convert your yard into a pristine historic green, these books will deepen your gardening know-how and open doors to times gone by. 🌿

Where to Find Antique Garden Books

Hunting in used bookstores, antique shops, and online auctions will turn up a fair share of gems, but there are several other reliable sources for quality old gardening books. Of these, Woodburn Books (woodburnbooks.com) consistently provides some of the most wonderful, high-quality old tomes, but expect to pay a premium. Horizon Books (horizonbook.com) is another, more specialized source for old gardening books. Abe Books (abebooks.com) and Alibris (alibris.com) are also good sources with many titles to choose from. And don't forget to look for reprints: Several of the 17th-century English gardening books by William Lawson, for example, have been reprinted by Prospect Books (prospectbooks.co.uk).

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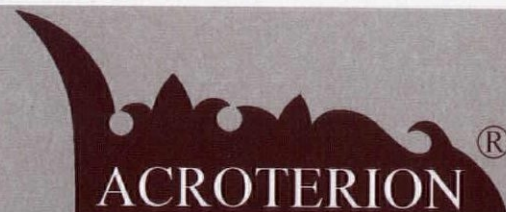
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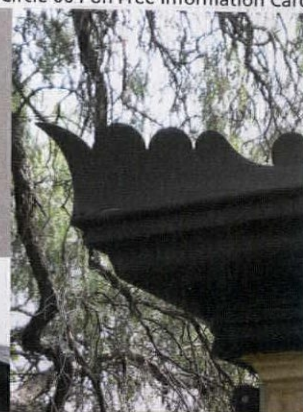
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ABOVE: The main bath blends history and reinvented objects. **OPPOSITE:** The first floor.



New Life for a Craftsman Bungalow

Family treasures, architectural artifacts, and local lore help to restore a northern Michigan farmhouse.

STORY BY ELIZABETH BOOTH O'TOOLE ♦ PHOTOS BY THOMAS KACHADURIAN



Little escapes the careful watch of Drogo, the resident llama, as he oversees a flock of Corriedale sheep and lamb. The next car to crunch past his pasture along the steep gravel driveway will surely belong to either Marek Ulicny or his partner, Dan Rice, and will undoubtedly bear treasures extracted from barn sales, salvage centers, or junkyards.

Both schoolteachers by day, the two work in tandem to re-create the past at their circa-1909 bungalow, located on a 16-acre farm on Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay. Although they share the same ultimate vision, Marek taps his construction roots to manage the project. Dan works alongside, wielding another critical role: "I reel him in when necessary," he laughs—like if the hammering and hauling reaches past midnight, or if Marek decides he wants to add a third floor over the weekend.

After renovating other homes, mostly from the 1970s, Marek was ready for something older. The two went to see an old cherry farm in Omena, Michigan, named Windy Knob Orchards. For sale was a Craftsman bungalow with accompanying barn, paddocks, migrant housing, and a little stone pump house. The area is famous for rolling hills, cherries, and stunning views of both Lake Michigan and Grand Traverse Bay; this perch has all three.

Eyeing the home's faded vinyl siding, rotting windows, and woodpecker-drilled cedar shake, the pair knew they had found their next project. "We like things we feel



we have a connection to—something that tells a story, or has some originality,” notes Marek. Fueled by a passion to restore the house’s classic Craftsman lines, Marek and Dan commenced renovation and, in the process, uncovered multiple mysteries.

Layered Repairs

To start, the entire 2,050-square-foot bungalow had been “wrapped” in 4” of concrete. Marek discovered that the first owners, the Laeffler family, had once been the victims of a tornado in Indiana—although tornadoes don’t typically descend on northern Michigan, they weren’t taking any chances. Marek and Dan decided to keep the unusual concrete

OPPOSITE: Clean-lined Craftsman details like wainscoting, three-over-one windows, and five-panel doors abound throughout the house. **ABOVE:** The entry porch affords spectacular views.

wrap and its inherent weather insurance.

Second, as a result of conflicting records, they’re still uncertain as to exactly when the bungalow was built. Tax documents state the house was constructed in 1909, while the MLS listing—and local lore—claim the house was built in 1935.


The two worked from the outside in to restore the house. They installed new cedar shake in the gables, repaired the exposed supports, and fixed the first-level stucco. The windows, which were not original, were replaced one by one as finances allowed. “We had a histori-

cal photo [from a previous owner] that showed the original windows and their divided-light pattern on the top sash,” says Marek. “In fact, one original exterior window remained under the addition, and it, too, gave us the inspiration for the divided light pattern.” The pair found wooden Marvin double-hungs to match the original windows.

As Marek and Dan began pulling and prying their way through every room of their bungalow, more surprises emerged. Behind broken plaster in the master bedroom, they found a faded photograph wedged in the wall. It was a picture of



Discover more creative uses for architectural salvage (and share your own ideas) in our special forum.

OLDHOUSEonline 

ABOVE: The painting was inspired by a 1940s photograph found inside a wall. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE:** The owners have revived original elements like built-in dressers, and added creative salvaged items like a window turned cabinet door and stools crafted from barn rafters.

a well-dressed man seemingly from the 1940s. The pair showed the photograph to neighbors and to previous owners, but couldn't find an identity for this mystery man. Dan re-created a pop art version of the photo, which today is on display in the master bedroom, near where the photograph was unearthed.

Most walls were so damaged that they were brought back to the studs, insulated, and re-plastered. "It's always a gamble," says Marek. "Like pulling plaster off the interior chimney. I was pretty sure there was brick back there—and that it would look good—but I had no idea for sure. It turned out great."

After chipping away 70 years' worth of floor coverings (carpet, linoleum, wood

subfloor, glued 9x9 tiles, and glued felt paper), they were thrilled to discover 5" heartwood pine planks. "The floors being original to the house was very important to us," says Marek. "It was tons of work to restore them. We used a wallpaper steamer to peel back layers, one square foot at a time." There are still gaps and cracks in some floorboards, but, says Marek, "It's perfect to think back on how many people have walked across these very same floors." More planks were found in a crawlspace; they were used for the upstairs bathroom floor, where boards were missing. They restored all of the flooring to its original honey-hued glory, and sealed it with bowling alley lacquer—not even their enormous Great Dane can dull the shine.

Removing the rotted windows of a west-facing room, Marek discovered that the room had originally been a porch; its cement base and stucco sides remained intact. He removed layers of soggy dry-wall, rotted 2x4 walls, and severely rotted windows. At last, he uncovered the original beadboard ceiling, which had sat for years behind cardboard ceiling tiles. This, too, they painstakingly repaired and brought back to life. Dan and Marek later learned through neighbors that this porch once housed the original owner's loom (an uncanny coincidence, given the pair's hobby of raising Corriedale sheep).

Miraculously, all of the interior's five-panel pine doors remained unpainted. Their ornate hardware remains a mystery, however, since it seems more suited to a city manor house than a simple country bungalow. In addition to restoring and



repairing the existing Victorian door-knobs and escutcheons, Marek and Dan have hunted for missing pieces—a search that frequently results in new treasures for the house, like the old wrought iron factory window they installed in the back stairwell, or the antique dresser they converted into a sink cabinet for the upstairs bathroom.

Waste Not

Many prominent architectural details are salvaged items. A transom window in the master bathroom (from an old Detroit home) and frosted glass paneled doors (from a barn sale) both serve to illuminate the small main-level bathroom. The bathroom's glass-paned cabinet door was originally from Dan's family home, which was rebuilt. "Dan's father saved many of the windows, carrying them from house

to house for years," says Marek. "Who knew we'd end up using one for a cabinet door? But it's great—it's old, has character, and the connection to where it's from is even better."

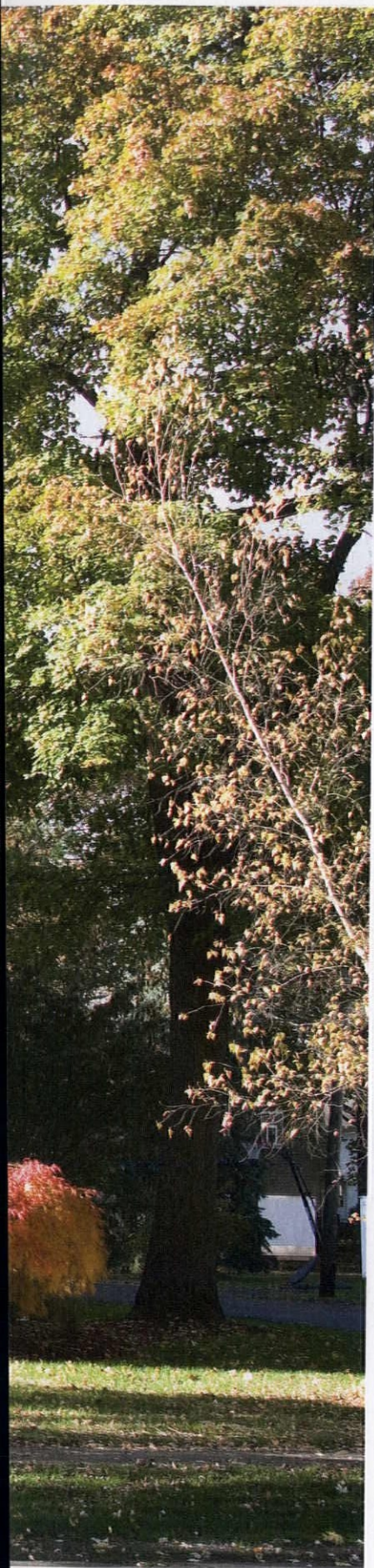
Dan and Marek also were able to salvage items from their own property to use in the restoration. Heavy faux beams installed at some point in the living and dining rooms were removed and reimagined as hay feeders for the livestock. Wood discovered in the barn was planed and reborn as door casing. The new kitchen stools were crafted from barn rafters, and the original, deeply weathered Windy Knob Orchard sign sits in a place of prominence along the dining room's chair rail for all to see.

Initially, a cheap bookshelf served as bathroom storage, but then the pair discovered a beat-up medicine cabinet in an

old tobacco farm during a trip to North Carolina. "No way," said Dan. "Trust me," said Marek. After a few days with paint stripper and a metal grinder, it now adds an era-perfect finishing touch—and highly desired hidden storage.

The dentil molding found along the mantel and built-in dresser, as well as the strong, simple door and window moldings, are evidence of both the Craftsman style and the owners' preference. "We are huge fans of clean, straight lines: Craftsman style, classic farmhouses, bungalows," explains Marek. "They all have details of craftsmanship without details just for the sake of details." The pair's discerning taste, matched with their passion for the past, has created a truly unique bungalow, built to withstand another century or more—and perhaps even a few natural disasters. 🏠





CONCRETE *possibilities*

A solid early 20th-century building material, cast concrete blocks are hard to find today. Learn how to make your own when replacements are needed.

STORY BY STEVE JORDAN ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

Homeowner Gary Stottler knew it wouldn't be easy to restore the front porch on his circa 1900 Queen Anne because of the material used. The porch—from the foundation piers to column capitals and even the apron in between—was constructed of cast ornamental concrete block, a material that was quite popular at the turn of the 20th century but went out of production

by the 1940s. Unfortunately, the porch was falling apart, and needed an additional column to correct a sagging roofline. Substituting modern blocks would have been unsightly, and replacing all the blocks would have changed the character of the porch. Gary was left with two choices: Find salvaged cast blocks for repair, or find a mason who could cast new blocks to match the old.

THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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Ornamental Concrete Block Houses



PERHAPS YOU'VE seen it in a foundation or early garage; maybe you know of a decorative porch or entire house made of it. More likely, you haven't given old-fashioned concrete block a second thought. Like linoleum, asphalt shingles, and ceramic tiles, ornamental concrete block was one of the host of building materials popularized in the late- and post-Victorian era, but now thought of as just "functional" or even unattractive. Opinion is changing, however, as more of us begin to recognize and appreciate the materials that helped make the turn-of-the-century period an exciting transition from old building traditions to the modern age.

From the late 1800s through the 1930s, ornamental block saw its heyday. Most was produced by local contractors, building-supply companies, or family businesses. Much block was made by homeowners merely for their own use, though. Block machines were heavily advertised to owner-builders, especially farmers who could purportedly make blocks for their own use "on rainy days" or "during the dull season of the year," producing up to 150 blocks per day.

Many architects of the time, of course, decried the use of concrete block as "untruthful" because of its blatant imitation of stone. Nevertheless, even Gustav Stickley, an influential leader in the Arts & Crafts movement and staunch advocate for "natural" materials, included a design for a "hollow cement block house" in his 1909 *Craftsman Homes*. And many other architects of the day included block houses in their planbooks.

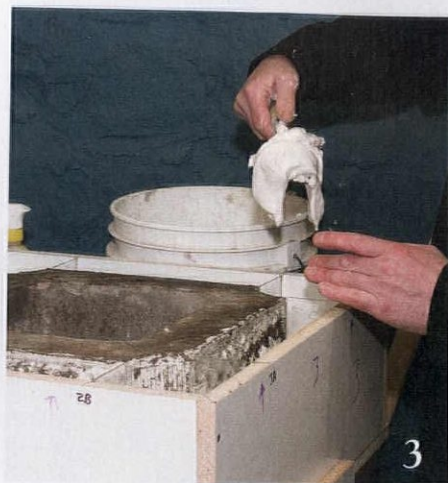
—J. Randall Cotton



ABOVE: Concrete blocks add layers of character to this porch.

Gary spoke to at least nine contractors; many came by, looked at the porch, and never called back. A catch-22 developed as carpenters commented that the project was mason's work and masons insisted it was a carpenter's domain. A local contractor, Doug Shultz, began repairs—removing and rebuilding the footings, and making structural repairs—but then the work stalled. At this point, many homeowners would have given up, but as a vintage-car enthusiast, Gary knew that anything can be done if you find the right person. That's when he discovered Marty Naber of Naberhood Restorations.

Marty was aware of some local attempts to replicate cast blocks. While the process isn't rocket science, it is slow and tedious. His first issue was how to make molds for the five rusticated block shapes: pier blocks, tapered bases, tapered column capitals, column drums, and column disks, all with the same rough-hewn finish. Although it's possible to buy mold-making materials that can be used repeatedly, because Marty needed to copy four designs (the fifth was an altered version of another), the cost of the materials would be prohibitive. Since he didn't need to make numerous copies, he chose to create mother-molds for the project out of molding plaster. These molds wouldn't last forever, but they would hold up for the number of blocks needed, and the materials were both locally available and inexpensive.



The Mother-Mold

Marty began by building a form to make the mother-mold. He chose melamine-surfaced particleboard for the form because it's less porous than bare wood, which makes it easier to remove from castings. He screwed the form together so that after the plaster sets, the mold can be unscrewed easily and pulled away from the new piece. He designed the form with 3" to 4" between the sides and the original block, which makes the mold sturdy enough to use repeatedly, and wide enough to trowel in the wet plaster.

After all the surfaces were well-coated with a petroleum-based release agent, he mixed enough plaster to trowel into the cavities, lightly tapped the sides to settle the wet plaster, and screeded the top for a flat surface. He let the plaster cure overnight, then disassembled the form and

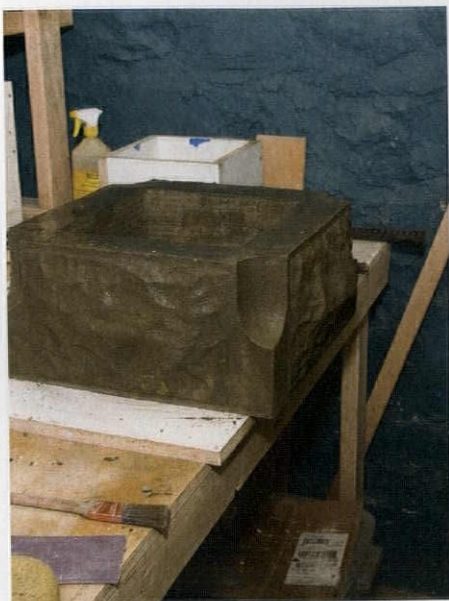
cut along each side of the mold with an oscillating tool to gently pull the pieces away and remove the original block. He was then ready to cast new blocks.

Old Is New

Just a few years ago, concrete blocks were impossible to find, but a new company has recently begun minting them again. Classic Rock Face Block, based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, uses molds (right) from the original Sears-marketed machines to re-create a range of concrete patterns, and offers blocks and veneers in a variety of shapes and sizes. For more information, visit classicrockfaceblock.com.



1, 2: Marty coats the original block with a release agent, then assembles a form around it. **3, 4, 5:** Next, he fills the form with plaster, taps its sides, and screeds the top for an even finish. **6:** After the plaster has cured, the form is unscrewed, and the mother-mold is cut along each side and removed.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Marty mixes concrete, measures the sides, and fills around the form. • At mid-fill, he adds rebar for strength, then finishes the pour and vibrates the interior block to spread the concrete. • Marty fills dings by hand, and lets the green blocks cure for 28 days prior to installation.



Casting Call

The original blocks were made from a dense mixture of Portland cement and sand. Marty chose pre-mixed high-strength concrete mix for his castings. Since the original blocks were hollow, he inserted an open-ended box in the mold, which he centered and screwed to the base to keep secure. To allow for expansion of the new concrete casting, and to make removal easier, he wrapped this box with $\frac{1}{8}$ " sill-seal closed-cell foam. After spraying all surfaces with the release agent, he mixed the concrete and gently troweled it into the void between the center box and the mother-mold, tapping the sides to remove voids and air bubbles. When the void was about half filled, he carefully inserted steel rebar to add strength and prevent cracking.

After letting the concrete set up for at least 12 to 15 hours, Marty disassembled the form and pulled the mother-mold away from the new "green" block. Next, he dampened the surfaces and rubbed them with a 50/50 slurry of Portland cement and sand mixed with a bonding agent to fill the honeycomb imperfections where the concrete didn't properly fill the space. Once the blocks dried, he sanded out the smooth surfaces with wet-or-dry sandpaper. He waited 28 days for the blocks to fully cure before installing them. During this time, they were covered with plastic and misted with water once a day to prevent premature drying.

SHORTCUT:

Making a Block

1. Construct a form slightly larger than the object being copied.
2. Create an impression (mother-mold) of the object being copied.
3. Cast the object.
4. Refine the final element prior to installation.

Block Party

Ornamental cast concrete blocks were popular from about 1890 until 1940, used most often for foundations but also for porch and whole-house construction. They were available at building supply houses, and also could be made on-site using block machines sold by Sears, Montgomery Ward, and other building suppliers. The 1910 Sears

Building Catalog sold molds not only for blocks, but also for fluted columns, column bases and capitals, piers, water tables, and nearly any detail needed to assemble a house. Removable plates allowed the machine to cast a variety of face designs, including rock face, ashlar, cobblestone, bush-hammered, or decoratively scrolled.



ABOVE: The restored porch—with new concrete blocks—is ready to weather another century.

BELOW: Getting everything plumb and level was critical when installing the porch columns and their bases—even a tiny error would show up as a gap at the top. Marty's team meticulously checked measurements during each step of the process.





Installation began with the heavy pier blocks, which weighed 150 pounds each. Because the piers join the columns at the deck and extend from the ground to the roof, there was no room for error—even a fraction of an inch mistake at the top would be obvious.

To maintain a perfect vertical installation, Marty hung a plumb line in the center of the assembly. As he added each block, he removed the line from a hook at the ceiling, inserted it through the block void, then reattached it. Joints were mortared with an exterior thin-set

mortar, varying from $\frac{1}{16}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and each piece was leveled in every direction and checked from a distance before moving on to the next.

This was no weekend project—it was carried out over two years on a time-and-material basis. Both homeowner and artisan were patient as the blocks were made and other work took Marty away. The Stottlers are pleased with their new porch, and Marty says he appreciated the opportunity to undertake and successfully complete this challenging restoration. 🏠



ABOVE: The footings for the latticed apron were 6" of concrete over 6" of gravel spanning between each pier. As with the other work, assembly of each apron element required careful calculation to ensure the courses were plumb, level, and ended exactly at the skirt board.

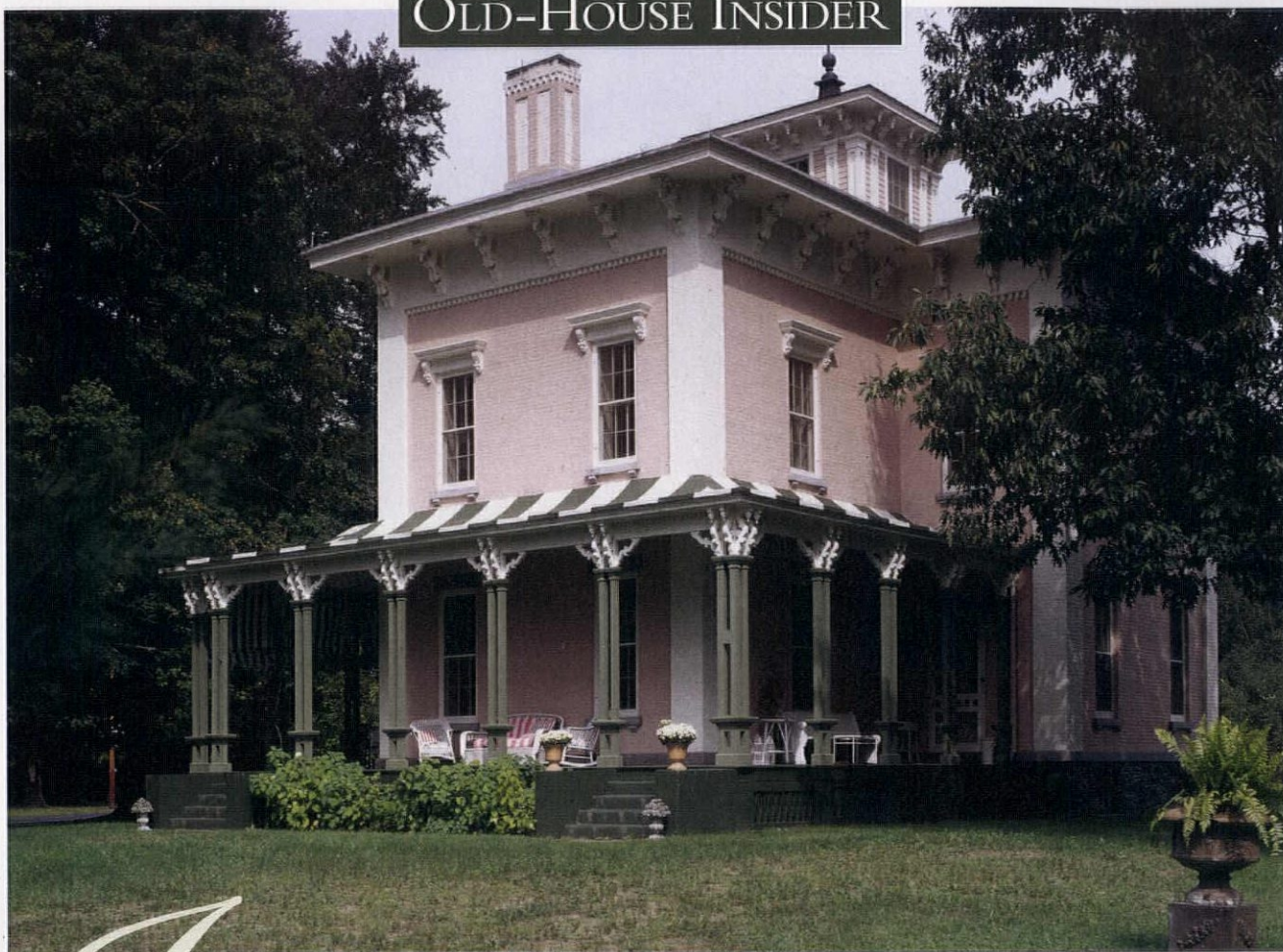


FLUENT *Italianate*

*Aided by period photos and a
wealth of 19th-century design
knowledge, an Italianate restoration
in New York hits the mark.*

STORY BY CLARE M. ALEXANDER ♦ PHOTOS BY TIM STREET-PORTER

OLD-HOUSE INSIDER



It's rare to find a mid-19th-century house that's survived almost entirely intact for more than a century, but it's even rarer to find one thoroughly documented in period photographs. Yet that was just the case with this 1850s Italianate in New York's Hudson Valley.

Before the current owner purchased it in the 1980s, the home had largely remained in the hands of one family. Thought to be built by Richard Upjohn, the British-born architect known for designing countless churches and the grand Italianate Edward King House in Newport, Rhode Island, the house was originally constructed for a wealthy textile mill owner whose heirs held onto the property until the mid-1960s.

When architect Kate Johns was called in to restore the property, she found evidence of only a handful of sig-

nificant changes (most of which were documented on a circa-1925 punch list secured from the previous owner): a few new coats of paint, relocation of the kitchen from the basement to the first floor, the addition of interior walls and dropped ceilings, and the removal of the distinctive central cupola.

"The house was absolutely beautiful," says Kate, "but nothing had been done to maintain it for many, many years."

Given the owner's background in architecture and the decorative arts, she knew she wanted to bring the house

ABOVE: In keeping with the house's other Regency colors, the columns on the front porch were painted to resemble verdigris. **OPPOSITE:** A restored Renaissance Revival mirror sits atop the marble fireplace in the living room.

back to its original 1850s state as much as possible—all while updating the heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical systems for the 21st century. The challenges of restoring such a grand house were aided by the original period photographs and documents, which were left in the house by the original owners.

Case in point: the cupola. It had been removed and roofed over sometime in the 1930s, but four structural posts remaining in the attic provided clues as to its dimensions, and 1860s photographs outlined its style. Kate blew up and analyzed the





LEFT: Hand-blocked ashlar wallpaper—a popular 19th-century treatment—enlivens the hallway. **BELOW:** Original doors provided a pattern for the new interior shutters. **OPPOSITE:** A vintage-looking stove, copper hood, and marble countertops contribute to the 1920s feel of the small galley kitchen.

PRODUCTS: Ashlar block and yellow striped wallpaper, Watts of Westminster. Kitchen: Farmhouse sink and Easton faucet, Waterworks; Legacy stove, Heartland Appliances; Paneled dishwashers, Miele. Bathroom: Console sink, Julia faucet, medicine cabinet, and sconces, Waterworks.

photos to create the design for its replacement, finishing it off with scaled-down versions of the eaves brackets lining the first and second stories. “Now it’s a finished room with wonderful views of the Catskills,” she says.

Another of the house’s most distinctive elements—the striped metal roof topping the wraparound porch—was also present in the period photos. Though the black-and-white photographs gave little indication as to the roof’s color scheme, Kate surmised that the original intent had been to make it look like a tent awning, a fashionable treatment during the mid-19th-century Regency period. “We chose green and white as a very traditional striped tent color scheme that also happened to look beautiful with the pink house,” she says.

The period photographs helped guide the restoration of interior details,

too, particularly the two large mirrors sitting atop mantels on the first floor. The Renaissance Revival mirror in the living room had been painted with gold radiator paint, while the Eastlake-style one in the dining room had been given a coat of white house paint. Kate hired a master gilder to restore their original luster.

Clued In

Other details, such as the bracketed hoods topping the windows on the front façade, revealed themselves through hands-on investigation. “We thought they were cast iron,” says Kate, “but when we started to remove the paint, we discovered that they were mahogany.” The strong hardwood had imbued the hoods with superior weather resistance; they needed nothing more than a fresh coat of paint.



On the first floor of the house, removing the dropped ceiling revealed original plaster moldings, which had been slightly mangled during various renovations over the years. “Fortunately, we could see a lot of them intact, so we knew what we had to do to restore them,” Kate says. They used the untouched moldings to make templates, then filled in the damaged areas with new plaster. Pockets within the window wells throughout the first floor and in the major bedrooms indicated that interior shutters had been removed; Kate was able to re-create them, using

RIGHT: A console sink and nickel-plated accessories recall the early days of indoor plumbing. **BELOW:** Removing interior walls allowed the master bedroom to return to its original proportions. **OPPOSITE:** Striped shades on the back porch continue the theme of the metal roof overhead.



the molding profiles of original doors throughout the house as models.

Where no concrete evidence of a room's previous incarnation existed, Kate relied on other period examples to inform her decisions. For instance, marble counters in the kitchen were inspired by those at The Mount, Edith Wharton's Italian-influenced mansion in Massachusetts. A Heartland stove, massive copper hood, and farmhouse sink complete the refined yet utilitarian look of the space. "The whole point of the kitchen was to make it harmonious with the house," the owner notes. "I've seen too many restorations where they fall for luxury granite counters, and it always sort of unsettles me."

The laundry room, meanwhile, was born from a tangle of steel posts, failing beams, and abandoned wiring and pipes in the basement. Kate removed the rotting wood floor, which had been laid directly over dirt, and replaced it with colored concrete that mimics linoleum. She also designed banks of cabinets to provide ample storage in a house where closets are practically nonexistent.

While the owner was happy to forgive the house's lack of storage ("People didn't have closets in the 1880s; they had armoires," she explains, "so we got a couple of armoires"), she wasn't as willing to overlook the outdated mechanical systems. The plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems were upgraded to modern standards. To overcome the difficulty of running traditional ductwork through the super-solid brick walls, Kate installed a high-velocity small-duct HVAC system, placing air handlers in the basement and attic to deliver air through the floors to the first and second stories.

Despite these new updates, the overall effect of the restoration is like taking a time machine back to the late 19th century. "The more we did to take it back to what it originally was," the owner says, "the happier the house got." 🏠

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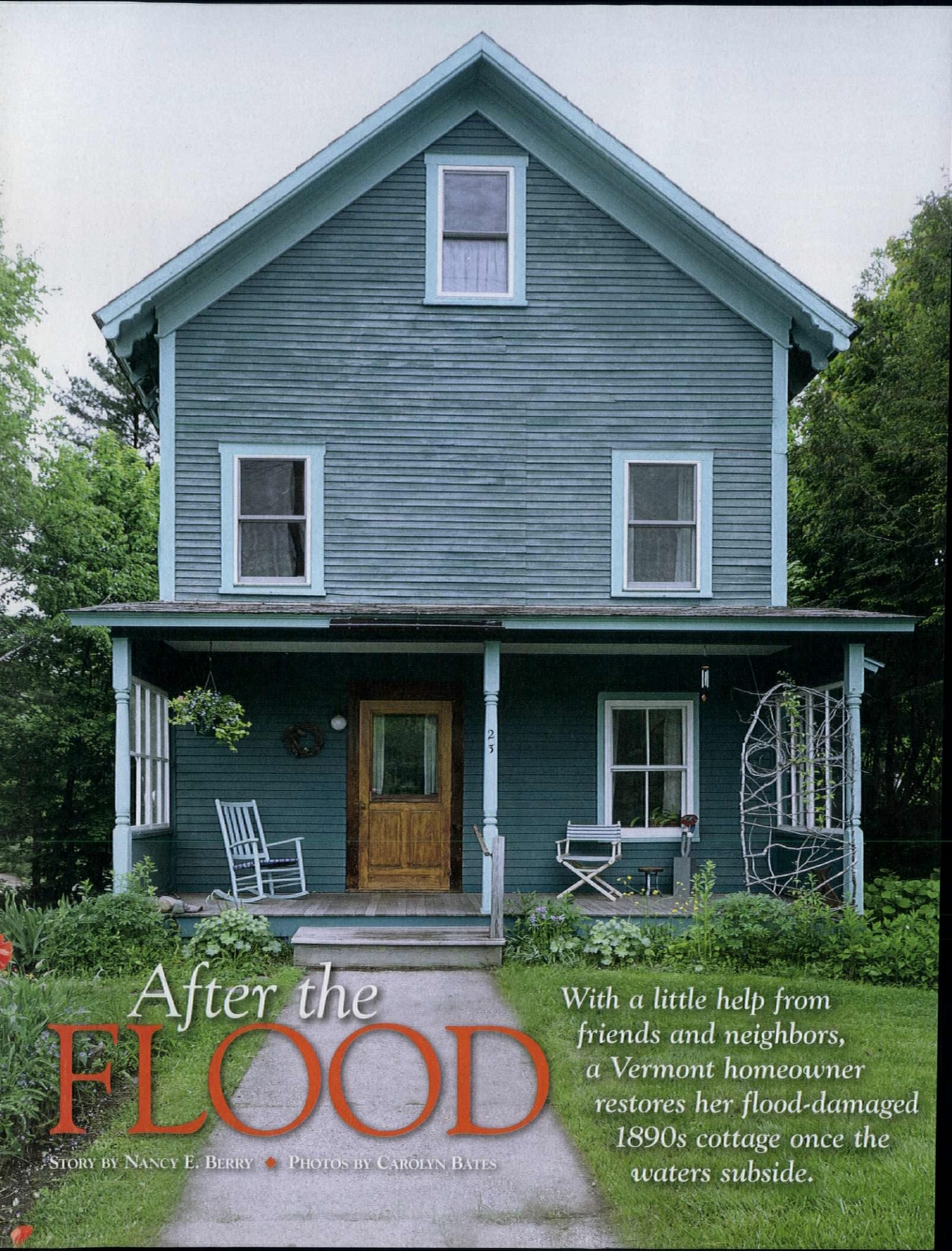
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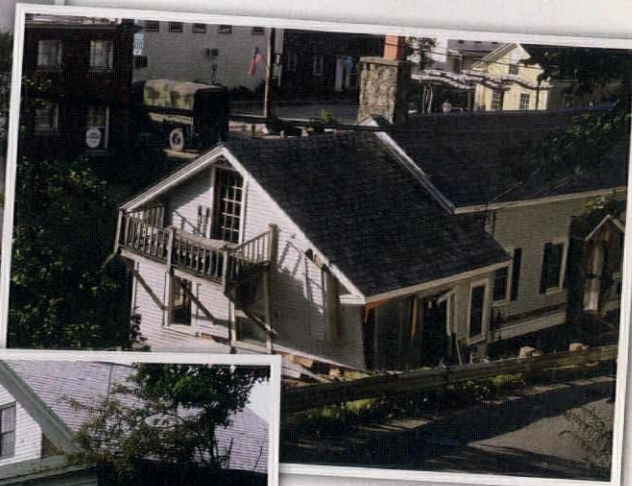
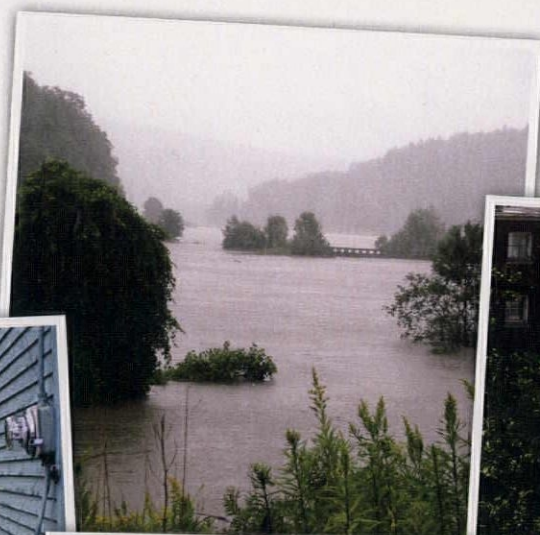
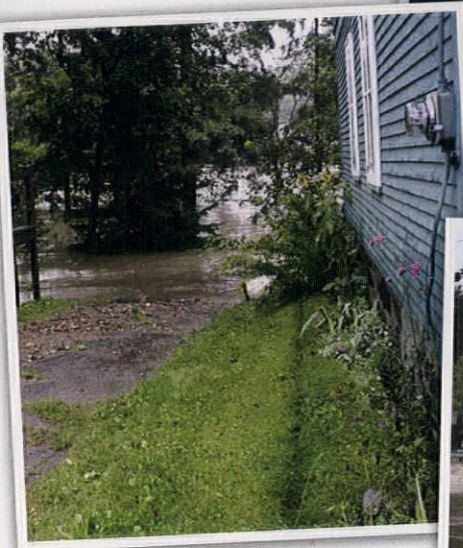




After the FLOOD

STORY BY NANCY E. BERRY ♦ PHOTOS BY CAROLYN BATES

With a little help from friends and neighbors, a Vermont homeowner restores her flood-damaged 1890s cottage once the waters subside.



ABOVE: Rains from Hurricane Irene caused the Deerfield River to overflow, flooding Wilmington's historic downtown—and Bettina Krampetz's house (far left). **OPPOSITE:** Two years after the storm, Bettina's 1890s cottage is good as new.

One doesn't often associate hurricanes with Vermont, but on August 28, 2011, the town of Wilmington—a picturesque, National Register-listed village on the southern edge of the state—was hit by the after-effects of Hurricane Irene. More than seven inches of rain fell between sunrise and sunset, causing the Deerfield River to spill over its banks and into the surrounding streets and houses.

"There hasn't been a natural disaster like this since the flood of 1938," says Joseph Cincotta, a local architect and volunteer first responder. That flood washed away countless bridges, roads, and railroads; in similar fashion, Irene caused roaring river waters to take down trees and utility poles, wash out roads, and sweep propane tanks and even cars down streets.

Joseph volunteered to assess damage to the town's historical buildings. His first visit was to neighbor Bettina Krampetz to

survey her modest 1890s Italianate cottage, which is bordered by the Deerfield River and Beaver Brook. At 7:30 a.m. on the day that Irene struck, the river began to rise above the flood plain. "By 10:30 a.m., the water was halfway up the basement stairs," Bettina says, "and I knew it was time to go."

She rode out the storm with friends Barbara LeVan and Eric Sprenger, whose house luckily sits uphill. "By the time Eric came to get me, my car tires were submerged in eight inches of water," she

notes. "We cooked a lasagna on the grill—the whole town had lost power—and waited through the night for the storm to settle."

The following day, Bettina returned to her house. "It was scary to see how much damage there was throughout town," she says. By then the water had subsided, but it still engulfed the basement and two inches of the first floor. Bettina looked to Joseph for some reassurance that repairs were possible, but first she had to deal with one inescapable truth: In about a day or two, mold would start to set in, and the architect did not recommend staying in the house.

Joseph's assessment held some positive news, however: "The house hadn't been forcefully removed from its foundation, so there was no structural damage." Even so, several fissures had formed in the first-floor wood flooring, and the kitchen's



lower cabinets were waterlogged.

In addition, "the basement's water heater had broken loose, the oil tank was up on its back legs, and the floor was covered in mud," Joseph notes. "Carpeting and rugs soaked up much of the liquid, which helped save the plaster walls." He determined that all-new wiring and plumbing were required, as well as a new water heater. "I was able to allay Bettina's concerns by breaking down the needed renovations into constituent parts," he says.

Bail Out

The first call of action was to get rid of moisture. Luckily, Eric Sprenger is not only a close friend, but also an accomplished craftsman and furnituremaker. He set up sawhorses in the front yard and started ripping out carpet and pulling up damp rugs with the help of Barbara and Bettina. The house had no electricity, gas, or clean water, although the toilet, which operated on the town sewer system, was working. Even with the looming

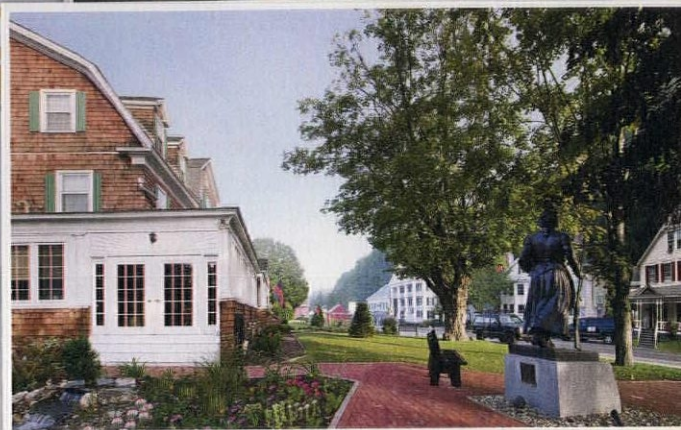
mold issue, Bettina decided to remain in the house—on the second floor—until she had a plan in place.

A few days after the storm, a representative from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), accompanied by Julie Lineberger (Joseph's wife, who was helping households register for assistance), came by to assess monetary damages. By September 7, Bettina had received a \$3,650 check from FEMA.

Four days after the storm, there was



TOP: ROLAND SCHNEIDER PHOTO



Wilmington's Recovery

Incorporated in 1751, Wilmington is the perfect model of a 19th-century Vermont town. Thanks to its more than 60 historical buildings, ranging from late Colonial to Queen Anne (plus a few Shingle Style structures built by famed architect Stanford White), the town earned a spot on the National Register in 1980. The village was once located on "Old Hill," but moved downhill in 1833 to be closer to the water power of the Deerfield River.

The destruction from the 2011 flood was substantial: Wilmington lost 40 businesses, 20 apartments, and its Municipal Services building. All town buildings sustained some level of damage, from flooded basements to total losses.

But thanks to nonprofit organizations such as the Wilmington Fund VT, businesses are getting help to restore the affected architectural gems. The fund supports Wilmington's recovery by raising money to help repair damaged buildings and to promote commerce and business activity through grants, low-interest loans, real estate ownership, and other investment opportunities and partnerships. Julie Lineberger, who works closely with the organization, estimates that almost two years after the flood, the town is 70 to 75 percent restored.

another knock on Bettina's door—a group from Mount Snow Ski Resort had arrived to help clear the basement of debris. Pretty much everything had to go because of the floodwater's toxicity. (During floods, rivers can pick up toxic substances due to chemical spills or treatment plant overflows.)

On September 13, a South Carolina-based team from the Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief organization visited and volunteered its expertise in decontaminating houses from floodwaters

ABOVE: Bettina got a FEMA grant to help her restore the first floor of her house, which was inundated during the flood.

RIGHT: The flood destroyed many downtown businesses, including Bartleby's Books (top); today, the town is back on its feet (bottom).

Flood Prep 101

Flooding can happen anywhere, but certain areas are at higher risk. (To find out if you live in one of these areas, visit msc.fema.gov.) To prepare your house for a flood, FEMA recommends:

- ◆ **Buying flood insurance**—standard homeowner's insurance doesn't cover flooding.
- ◆ **Elevating the furnace**, water heater, and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- ◆ **Consider installing** "check valves" to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains of your home.
- ◆ **If feasible, construct barriers** to stop floodwater from entering the building, and seal basement walls with water-proofing compounds.



BETTINA KRAMPETZ PHOTO



and mold. They determined that the lower kitchen cabinets and first-floor flooring were too water-damaged to save. Bettina worked side by side with the group to empty cupboards and haul furnishings to the second floor. Even her piano was put on a trailer and stored inside a dry barn. After the cabinets and flooring were removed, the group power-washed the basement and first floor and then sprayed an EPA-registered disinfectant and fungicide to combat any growing mold spores.

Better Than New

Once she realized how extensive the restoration would be, Bettina decided

to move out of the house, taking refuge at the home of friends who were traveling in France. Because the damage was more than she originally estimated, she reapplied for additional FEMA assistance, and was awarded an additional \$20,000 in grants from FEMA, the United Way, and Southeastern Vermont Community Action. She also received \$2,500 from insurance claims, all of which would help her purchase the required mechanical systems, as well as new flooring and kitchen cabinets.

Once funding was in place, Bettina and Eric developed an overall plan for the restoration. "I wanted to keep the

new space simple and as close to the original as possible," she notes. With the floors gone, Eric noticed that the original subflooring was sagging and installed support beams in the basement to lift it slightly. "If I jacked up the flooring too much, the house could potentially become unstable, and the plaster walls could crumble," he notes.

With the subfloor fixed, the next project was to install new flooring. "We wanted to make the floor as level as possible—something difficult to do in an old house," says Eric. "It took us two weeks just to frame and shim." Once the framing was in place, his team put down a ¾"



plywood subfloor and then the maple flooring. "We had to go back and trim the door bottoms to accommodate the $\frac{3}{4}$ " rise," says Eric.

Next, he added insulation and drywall to the kitchen's outer wall, behind the lower cabinets, where none had existed before. He then installed modest stock cabinets and a soapstone countertop. Meanwhile, the first-floor bathroom received a new linoleum floor, the house was rewired, and a new water heater was installed. The oil tank had taken on water and had to be emptied and dried before being refitted. The downstairs received a fresh

coat of paint, and Eric salvaged the old kitchen cabinets to make a new linen cupboard for the bathroom.

On November 5, Bettina moved back into her second floor while Eric completed the rest of the repairs. "I had running water in the bath and a toaster and microwave to cook my meals," she says. By December 1, she had running water and a new stove in the kitchen.

"I love my old house and didn't expect it to flood in my lifetime," Bettina says. "I'm so glad to be back here, and am so grateful to all the volunteers who helped in the process." 🏠



LEFT & INSET: Floodwaters damaged the kitchen cabinets beyond repair; new stock cabinets and a soapstone countertop were cost-effective replacements.

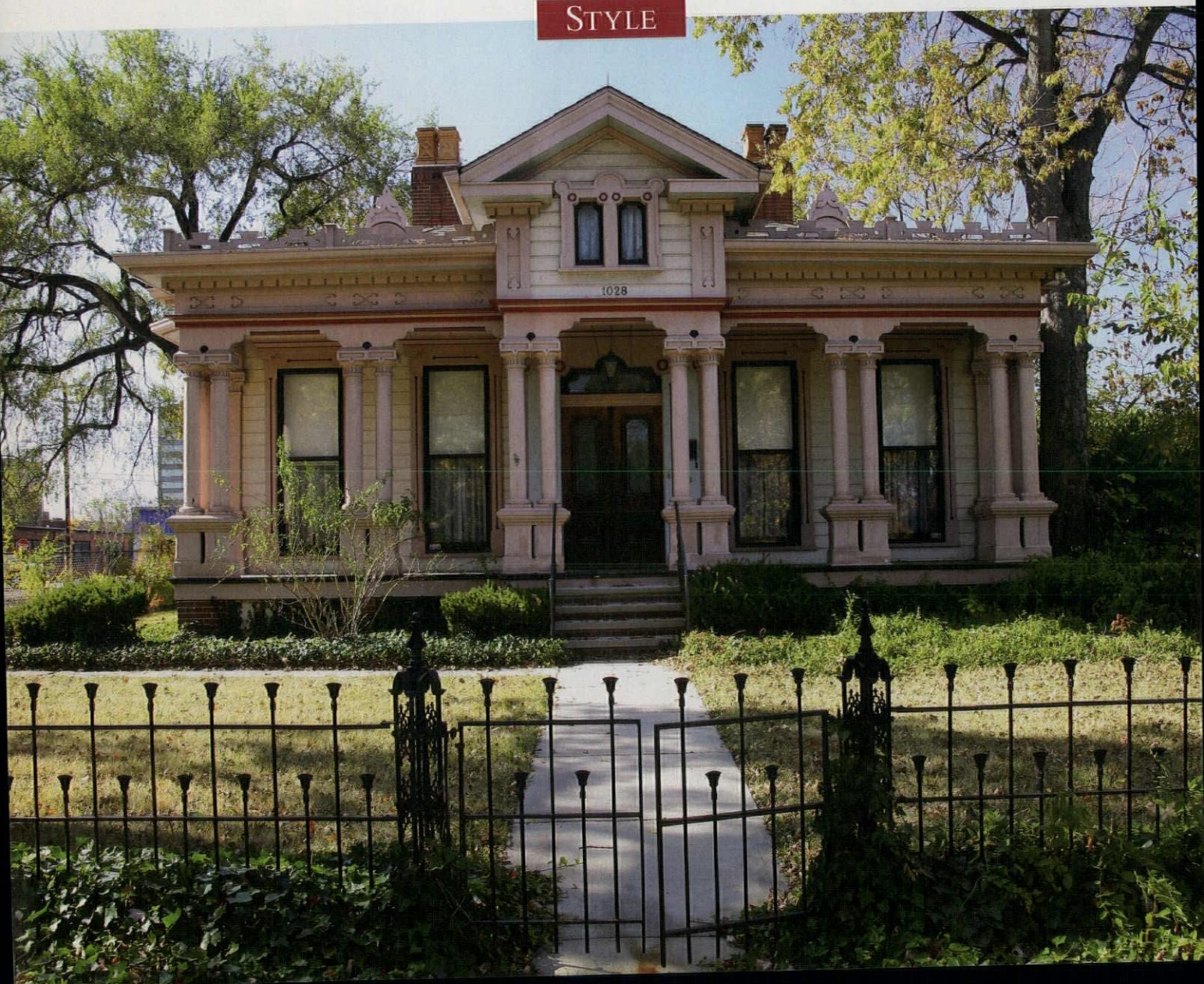
TOP: Salvageable elements of the kitchen cabinets were repurposed in the bathroom. **ABOVE:** New maple flooring was installed throughout the first floor.

Victorian SURPRISES

Impressive houses abound on Indianapolis' north side.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

STYLE



In the post-Civil War era, Indianapolis' north side, located just beyond the city's business district, was home to Hoosier movers and shakers of all kinds—presidents, poets, business leaders, and socialites. The large, fashionable buildings along its tree-lined streets celebrated its residents' wealth and importance.

Today, despite the effects of time, growth, and modern intrusions—highways, big apartment buildings, and commercial construction—in this once-exclusive residential enclave, the opulent High Victorian mansions and more modest late 19th-century cottages of the Reconstruction period continue to steal the spotlight in the Old Northside and Lockerbie Square Historic Districts. As luck and a hard-working preservation community would have it, several of the best High Victorian examples are now museums of history and period decorative arts, and many others have been carefully rehabilitated by private owners.

Museum-Worthy

The Morris-Butler House Museum at 1204 N. Park Avenue is a great place to

begin looking at the Victorian legacy of the Hoosier capital. Constructed between 1864-1865, this 21-room, mansard-roofed beauty is an exuberant example of French-inspired Second Empire elegance. Upwardly curving, double-sloped mansard roofs on the main block and central tower are the hallmark of the Second Empire style. An Italianate flair is also evident in the huge central tower (or campanile), round-arched windows, and especially the elaborately decorated arched entrance. The tower's brick walls are punctuated with lighter-colored stone belt courses at each story; a highly decorative porch with arched openings, crowned by a balustraded deck, is tucked into a front corner.

The Morris-Butler House was built by architect Dietrich A. Bohlen, a German immigrant who practiced widely in

Living Tall

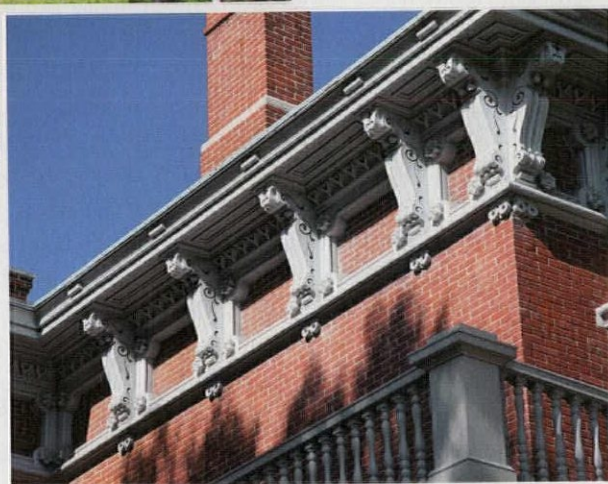
In the United States, Second Empire Style is sometimes called "General Grant Style," because it was used so often for public buildings during President Ulysses S. Grant's administration (1869-1877), but it also appeared fairly often on houses large and small. The style's signature mansard roof is credited to an inventive 17th-century Frenchman, François Mansart, who sought to provide a full story of well-lit attic living space without incurring property taxes on the extra story—which remained, technically and for tax purposes, merely an attic.

OPPOSITE: The richly ornamented 1873 Kemper House displays a notable High Victorian front porch with paired columns and fancy gingerbread. **BELOW, LEFT & RIGHT:** A prominent arched, two-story porch distinguishes the 1865 Morris-Butler House, which also has a small, formal porch on its front façade, off of the parlor.





LEFT: What American city wouldn't be proud of its own presidential home site? Benjamin Harrison, our 23rd Chief Executive, built this Italianate mansion in 1875 and added the neoclassical wraparound porch in 1896 after he left the White House. **BELOW:** The Harrison House has an unusually deep fascia sporting muscular, decorated consoles under a large and elaborate cornice.



Historic Artery

To discover a complete picture of how Indianapolis' upscale residential development grew over the past two centuries, all you need to do is follow Meridian Street, the great north-south artery of the town, as it extends northward from the business district. Mile by mile, decade by decade, you'll find an arresting history of neighborhoods and architectural styles, from Victorian through Queen Anne to the Eclectic Revivals to mid-century modern.

Indiana, for Indianapolis businessman and politician John D. Morris and his family. The family of the second owner, prominent attorney Noble Chase Butler, lived there until 1958. Since being restored and furnished by Indiana Landmarks in 1964, it's been a decorative-arts museum illustrating the unabashedly opulent lifestyle of wealthy Indianans of the Victorian age.

In Indianapolis, High Victorian doesn't have to mean huge. Locals sometimes refer to the 1873 Kemper House at 1028 N. Delaware Street as the "Wedding Cake House"—an apt nickname, as it was a bridegroom's gift to his wife. (The National Register of Historic Places lists it as the Pierson-Griffiths House, for the first two owners.) The architect of this fanciful mélange of frothy Classicism with hints of everything from Gothic Revival to Italianate is unknown, but his work has enchanted generations of Northside visi-

tors and residents. Eli Lilly, founding force of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (now Indiana Landmarks), led the battle to preserve it. The one-story house has a glorious abundance of ornamental paired columns and decorative brackets on its long front porch; a big, forward-thrusting dormer boasting a broken pediment and arched double windows; towering brick chimneys; and a dauntingly decorative (and unusual) acroterion, the topmost element at the roof's edge.

The Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site at 1230 N. Delaware Street is a National Historic Landmark. Benjamin Harrison, the 23rd president of the United States—grandson of our ninth president, William Henry Harrison—was a prominent Indiana attorney and politician in 1874-75 when he built this impressive 16-room Italianate-style brick house designed by H. Brandt. Harrison added a classical-columned wrap-

around front porch in 1896, after returning to Indianapolis following his single term in the White House. The large and elaborate stone-trimmed, lozenge-shaped attic windows in the front wall frieze are repeated on side bays and simulated elsewhere. The house is open to the public and is furnished with many objects that belonged to the Harrison family.

International Influence

South of Old Northside and east of downtown, the area known since the 1850s as Lockerbie Square included an earlier neighborhood called Germantown. Immigrants from Germany and German-speaking areas of France settled here in the first half of the 19th century, building their homes, shops, and churches. Many of these still stand, and a walking tour of the area reveals a charming picture of a middle- and working-class neighborhood during



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Lockerbie Square's finest mansion, the Italianate James Whitcomb Riley House; a late Queen Anne with some early 20th-century details; a picturesque Arts & Crafts house with Old English lines.



the years before and after the Civil War.

Several houses around Lockerbie Square today were rescued from other endangered locations in the 1970s, and moved there as part of a major preservation effort by Indiana Landmarks, but many reflect the original working-class origins of the square. Small, two-story, gable-front houses with minimal front porches shaded by simple shed roofs are typical. Later owners have sometimes

built substantial additions and repainted, refurbished, and rehabilitated the houses to modern standards—while carefully hewing to Indiana Landmarks' guidelines. But prosperity was by no means foreign to 19th-century Lockerbie Square. The most celebrated of the square's Victorian homes is the James Whitcomb Riley House at 528 Lockerbie Street. The Hoosier Poet, as he is most often designated in literary circles, didn't own this house—or any other, for

that matter. His dear friends, Major and Mrs. Charles Holstein, were the owners, but Riley lived and worked there as a paying guest for more than two decades at the end of his life. Built in 1872 by Mrs. Holstein's father, a prosperous bakery owner, the substantial brick residence was designed by Robert Platt Daggett in the Italianate style, with a truncated hip roof, many-bracketed wide cornice, round-arched window and door openings, and scrollwork corner porch. Right across the street is the cottage home of the Holsteins' longtime housekeeper, Katie Kindall, who was also the first hostess of the museum house established by Riley's friends after his death.

Like many close-in urban neighborhoods, Old Northside has had its share of downturns and setbacks, losing some of its grandest mansions, watching others decay, and suffering the addition of modern architectural anomalies. For decades, however, residents and other enthusiasts have been bringing back once-neglected houses. Led by local activists such as the Lockerbie Square Peoples Club and encouraged by the powerful Indiana Landmarks, preservationists have rallied to reclaim significant remnants of the city's Victorian elegance and charm. 🏠

Repair Stucco Cracks

BY STEVE JORDAN ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

Hairline or map cracks—the scourge of many a stucco wall—can occur due to settlement, poor construction, or as self-healing control joints. They may be long and barely visible, or widen gradually to $\frac{1}{8}$ " or more. Whether static or moving with weather changes, hairline cracks can allow water between stucco and sheathing, attracting insects or promoting rot and mold. They are unsightly, but repairs often make them look worse. Marty Naber of Naberhood Restorations in Rochester, New York, has perfected a special technique for repairing hairline cracks.



Step 1

You'll need a small trowel, duster brush, caulking gun and tube of tri-polymer sealant, hammer, and a 12" x 12" piece of sheet metal or thin cardboard. Purchase the sealant at a good builder's supply store. Don't substitute another caulk or sealant—tri-polymer is highly flexible, UV-resistant, and has outstanding adhesion, so it will move with the crack without failing. Your only patching material is a piece of finish stucco taken from the same structure—ideally from a larger failing area or a sacrificial area.



Step 2

Start by cleaning the crack with a trowel or putty knife, then brush away any loose material or debris from it and the adjacent surface. Note if any large areas (cracks approaching $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide or large areas on either side of the crack) are loose; if so, this indicates the need for more comprehensive repairs. Using a damp paintbrush, gently sweep dust or powdery residue from the crack and let it dry.

3



Step 3

Take a piece of the finish (top coat) stucco that has failed; place it on the sidewalk or driveway on a heavy piece of plastic, cloth, or cardboard; and pulverize it with a hammer until it resembles the original powdery mortar mix first used to create the wall (a few chunks are OK). Set it aside.

4



Step 4

Next, fill the crack with tri-polymer sealant. Cut a fine orifice on the sealant tube, approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " below the tip (more if the crack is wider) and fill the crack, taking care to keep the sealant in the crack only and to not get any onto the stucco surface. Since some caulk guns work better than others, this can be difficult. If you apply too much or smear it on the surface, clean it immediately with a soft rag dipped in mineral spirits. Depending on the weather, fill about one linear foot at a time—the sealant will skin over quickly when it's warm, and you don't want it to set up before the next step in the procedure.

5



Step 5

The final step requires some practice so you don't waste the precious pulverized repair material. Make a cradle with the metal or cardboard, and put a small handful of the pulverized stucco in it. Holding the mix adjacent to the freshly filled crack, gently blow the material so it sticks and covers the sealant, then carefully tamp it in with a soft brush.

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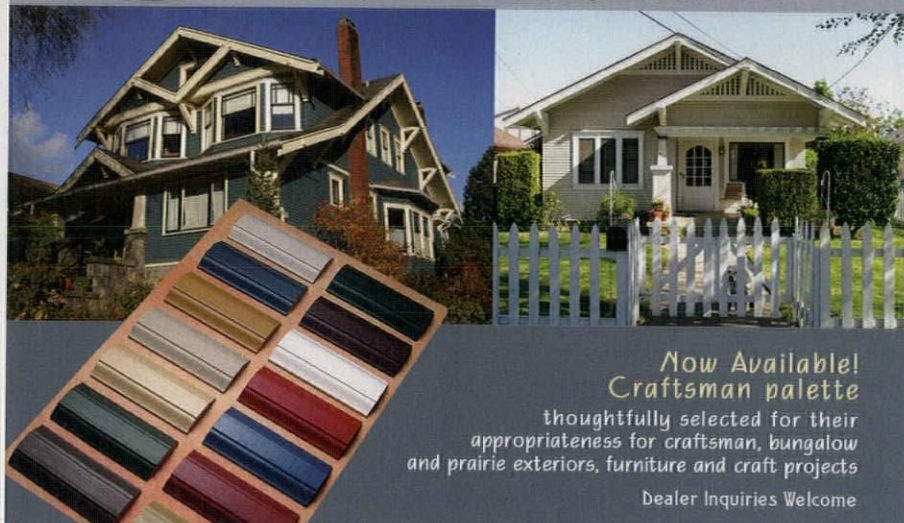
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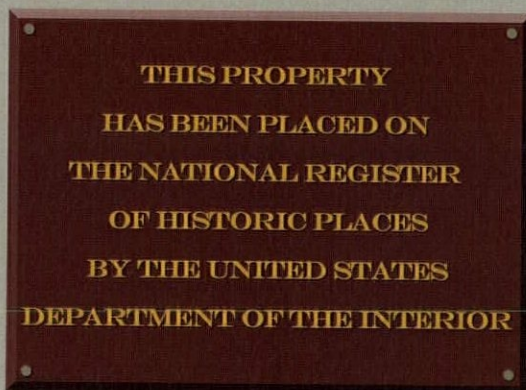


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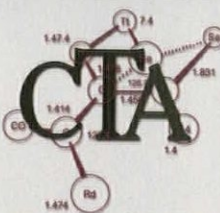
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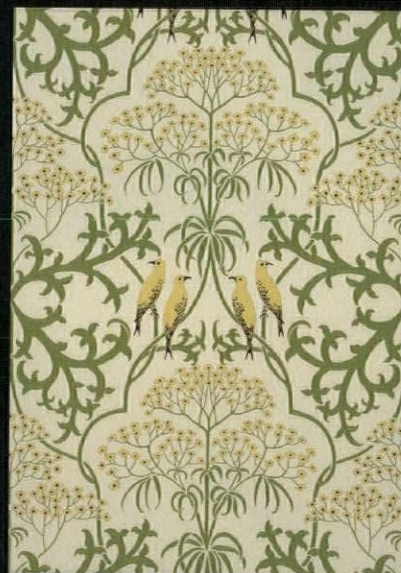


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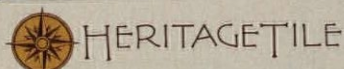


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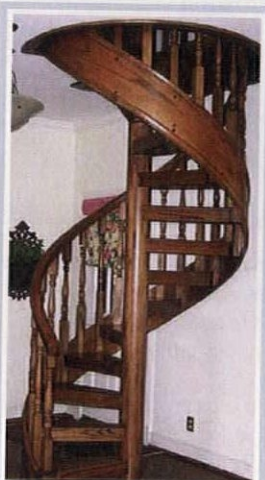
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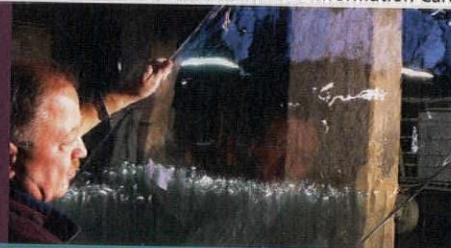
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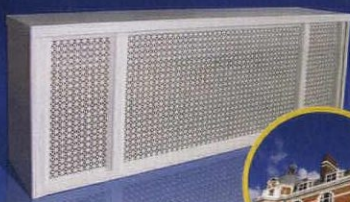
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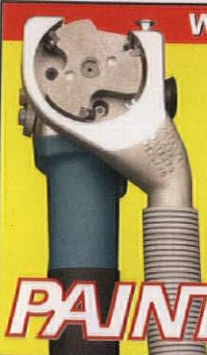
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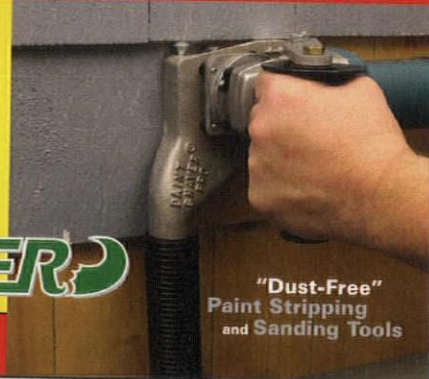


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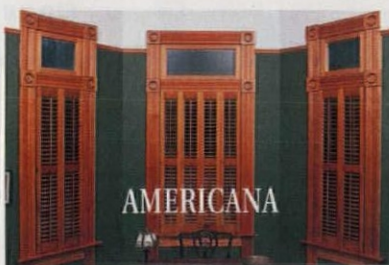


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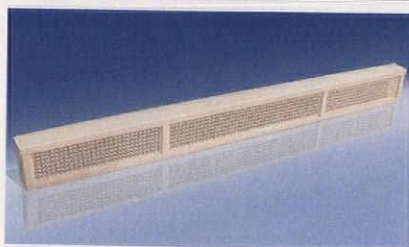


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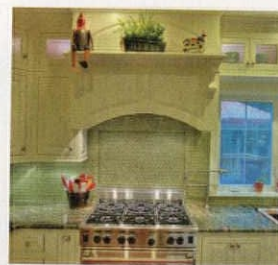
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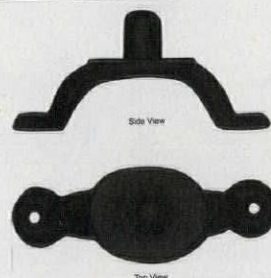


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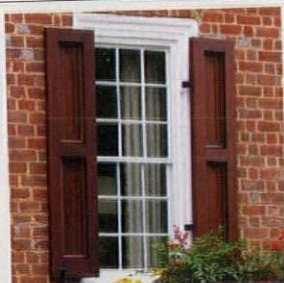


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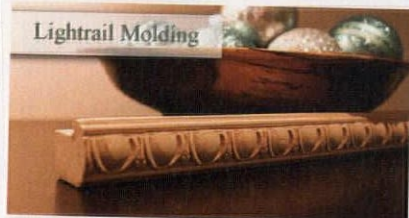
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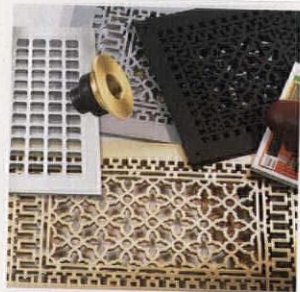


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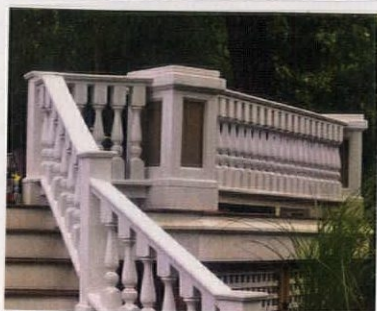


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Historic Properties

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RAHWAY, NJ—Built in 1659 and moved in 1991 onto gorgeous 0.37-acre lot adjacent to park. All new foundation, plumbing, and mechanicals. Professionally landscaped with specimen trees, plants, swale, Koi pond, in-ground pool with waterfall, deck, estate fencing and circular drive. 3 wood-burning fireplaces, wide-plank hardwood flooring. House has generous rooms including living room, formal dining room with exposed beam ceiling, updated kitchen, breakfast room, pantry, family room, and office. 2nd floor includes master suite, 2 additional bedrooms, and 2nd full bath. Teri Malone-Marsh, 732-423-2792. www.seetheproperty.com/r/110436

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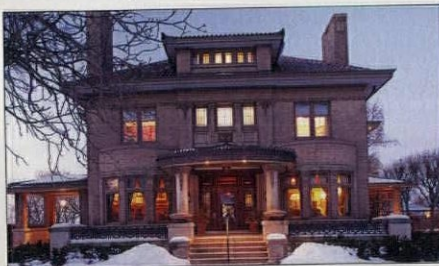
FORREST CITY, AR—Walker-Buford House, circa 1912. 100 years old—only 2 owners. 1st owner, Tom Buford, built with timber off his farm, milled in Memphis. Craftsman woodwork in most of house remains original, never been painted. 4,140 sq. ft., on a 126' x 190' lot with 6-ft wrought iron fence, 6 bedrooms, 3 stories + basement. Elvis signed contract in living room, 1955, with present owner. \$75,000. Martha Wilson, Martha Wilson Realty, 870-633-7422, mwilsonrealty@sbcglobal.net.



LE MARS, IA—Grand Victorian circa 1896 located in the Forest Park National Historic District has beautiful open staircase, original oak floors, 5 large bedrooms, grand living room with fireplace, and formal dining room with exquisite built-ins. Basement is finished; walk up attic for extra space. Curb appeal is amazing having the original carriage house on site. Great family home or bed and breakfast. \$259,500. Linda Mayrose, Property Pros, 712-548-6889 or linda@lindamayrose.com.



BELLAIRE, MI—Acclaimed Queen Anne Victorian circa 1895 B&B is one of the most photographed buildings in the nation. 6,600sqft on 1/2 acre corner lot. Handcrafted birdseye woodwork, three fireplaces, original lights, hand painted ceilings! 4 bedrooms w/private baths plus 3rd floor innkeepers' quarters. 2005 carriage house w/2 suites and 2-bay garage. Popular tourist area. \$649,900 turnkey; \$495,000 real estate. Call 231-533-6111 or see www.grandvictorian.com/forsale.htm



MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Restored to its former glory the Historic Donaldson Mansion on Lowry Hill, sits on 1 acre and includes main residence, carriage house with 2 bedroom apartment, and lot. Amazing attention to details and original features throughout: 12,000+ sq.ft., 7 bedrooms, 9 bathrooms, 4 car garage, state of the art technology, and so much more! \$5,975,000. Jennifer Kirby, Kirby Fine Homes, 651-785-3400. www.1712MountCurveAvenue.com



VICKSBURG, MS—This 1830s Greek Revival Mansion is constructed of solid brick. Completely renovated, views of Mississippi River, perfect for B&B. Features 12-foot ceilings, hardwood floors, grand 3-story staircase, 8 fireplaces, formal living & dining rooms. 5 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, laundry room. Beautifully landscaped corner lot, detached workshop. On National Register & in HABS Collection of the Library of Congress. \$549,000. Nelda Sampey, 601-415-7974 or msampey@bellsouth.net



SANDWICH, NH—Relax on the back screen porch overlooking beautiful gardens & pond in the historic district of Center Sandwich. Antique cape, located on a quiet side street, has been exquisitely remodeled, with many of the original features. An attached barn with workspace, parking, plus a heated office above. Wide pine floors and beamed ceilings throughout make this home a must see. \$340,000. Lisa Wardlaw, Lamprey & Lamprey REALTORS, Inc., 800-834-5759. lampreyandlamprey.com

Historic Properties



SANDWICH, NH—Classic antique cape with beautiful landscaping and attached barn located in the historic district of Center Sandwich. Restored property offers all the charming amenities of an antique home but with many contemporary additions for today's lifestyle. Post & beam construction, stone walls & steps from the village pond complete this in-town gem. \$325,000. Marilyn Ambrose, Lamprey & Lamprey REALTORS, Inc., 800-834-5759. www.lampreyandlamprey.com



INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP, NJ—Elmcrest Farms on 9.6 acres is an oasis of natural serenity. Separate formal and informal living spaces. Chef's kitchen, high beamed ceiling family room, formal dining room all have fireplaces. Enjoy the patio, screen porch, carriage house and pool. Bring your chickens and plant an orchard. Rarely does an opportunity for acreage like this present itself. \$625,000. Stephanie Smith, Coldwell Banker, Westfield, NJ 908-230-8585. www.HistoricHomesNJ.com



PALESTINE, TX—1907 gracious and restored Foursquare. Original crown moldings, floors, doors, windows, hardware & beamed ceilings. Original mural on canvas in formal dining room. 3 gas fireplaces. 4932 sq.ft., 3 bedrooms & 2 1/2 baths. Renovated master suite. 2 staircases. Office with built-ins. Porte-cochere, many porches. Nearly an acre w/park view. Pool. Ideal for entertaining. \$379,000. Mary Alice Largent, Century 21 Pace McDonald Inc., 903-391-3800. www.maryalicalargent.com



SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ—Country Retreat...minutes from downtown Westfield. Over an acre surrounds this former artist's residence. Circa 1760 elegant home with 6 fireplaces, beamed ceilings, wide plank floors, high ceilings and covered back patio. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, master bedroom suite, eat-in kitchen, family room & 2 back staircases. Close to NYC Transportation, schools & restaurants. \$499,000. Stephanie Smith, Coldwell Banker, Westfield, 908-230-8585. www.HistoricHomesNJ.com



CHASE CITY, VA—Colonial Revival, circa 1941. This grand 6100 sq.ft. home has charm and character in each room showing off its crown and dentil molding as well as wainscoting. Arches and period paint colors throughout. Reproduction brass hardware. Period brass and crystal light fixtures accent this beautiful home. Dining and living rooms have original fireplaces. \$495,000. Max Sempowski, Old House Properties at Keller Williams Realty, 434-391-4855. oldhouseproperties.com

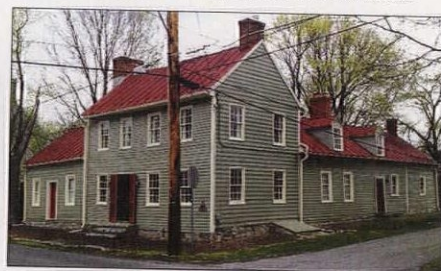
SPOTLIGHT PROPERTY



CINCINNATI, OH—206-year-old brick and stone Federal style home on almost 3/4 acre. Perfect for B&B. Originally owned by the family of William Henry Harrison. Oldest house in Sayler Park, about 10 miles to the west of downtown. Audubon setting with tremendous birds and woodland wildlife. English garden and courtyard. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, "Rookwood" fireplace, distressed glass windows throughout, hand-hewn timbers in the attic, and original log supports in the basement. Believed to have been barged into the Ohio valley via the Ohio River. Remodeled and updated respectfully. \$177,000. Elaine Flinn. 740-815-7606 or eaflinn@msn.com



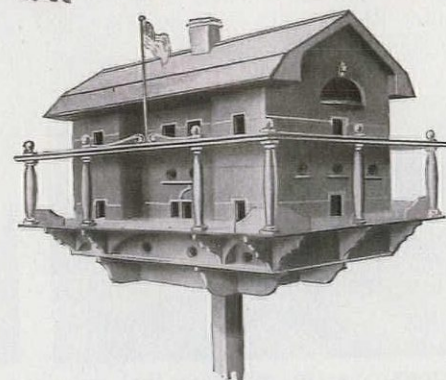
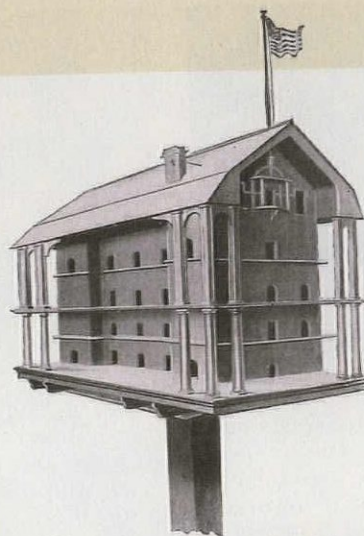
BIRDSBORO, PA—Architectural masterpiece by renowned architect Frank Furness. Circa 1888, 13,700 sq.ft., 42 rooms, 16 bedrooms, 9 baths & 10 hand carved European fireplaces. 3 acres, zoning variance: bed & breakfast, restaurant, office, private residence. Listed as one of the 21 most noted homes in the world. The ultimate antique, Brooke Mansion is 95% original. Circular rosewood library, pocket doors. 1 hour west of Philadelphia. \$1,900,000. 800-358-2290 or 717-399-7995. www.brookemansion.com



MIDDLEWAY, WV—1750 charming home located in this historic town has been lovingly restored. A few of the timeless original details include 6 fireplaces and wide-planked floors. Enjoy the pleasing landscaping from the gazebo or from the 2nd-floor balcony. Short distance to Charles Town, Martinsburg, Winchester, and Northern VA. MRIS #JF8057483. \$379,000. Kerry Stinson (lic. in VA, WV), Prudential PenFed Realty, Winchester, VA, 703-577-9560. kerrystinson.pfagent.com

a page from history

By BO SULLIVAN



The Dodson Birdhouses, Joseph H. Dodson, Chicago, Illinois, 1914

For The Birds

I love the birds," declared Joseph H. Dodson in his 1914 catalog (though the little girl on the cover seems to harbor some Hitchcock-worthy misgivings). Particularly enamored with martins, Dodson waxes poetic for more than 30 pages on the practical, moral, and spiritual benefits of living with our fine-feathered friends. (Incidentally, he wasn't so fond of the European starlings and English house sparrows who displaced his precious martins, referring to them as "mean, quarrelsome, selfish, useless, and unclean.")

Given his affinity for most things avian, it's not surprising that Dodson, a stockbroker by day, devoted all of his spare time to building and selling birdhouses, a hobby business that extended well into the 1940s. "My own work is in financial affairs," he wrote, "and yet

there is no success in my life that I value higher than my success as an architect for birds."

He wasn't kidding about the "architect" part. An apparent period house enthusiast, Dodson's largest and most elaborate models included a 56-room Colonial Martin House (top) and a 42-room Queen Anne Martin House (bottom). Each was architecturally complete, with elaborate porches, tiny flagpoles, and even little rooftop chimneys (though there's no mention of miniature martin fireplaces). With luxurious homes like these, who wouldn't want their neighborhood to go to the birds? 🏠

Bo Sullivan is the historian for Rejuvenation and the owner of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Oregon. He is an avid collector and researcher of original trade catalogs.

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remuddling



Under Wraps

Like spies attempting to hide their identities, old houses sometimes take on new forms. Take, for example, these two simple Foursquares in the same neighborhood. While one (at left) retains its original double-hung windows, glass-topped paneled door, and a sweet porch with turned posts, the other (at right) has donned an unconvincing disguise. Wearing a series of mismatched picture windows, a big-box entry door—in a new location, no less—and an awkward, boarded-in porch that resembles a bad wig, the house camouflages its roots.

“One house has made all the right choices, and one has made all the wrong ones,” laments our contributor. We think that when houses try too hard to go undercover, they can sometimes end up standing out like a sore thumb. 🐣

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